

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE
School of Management

SOCIAL INTERACTION IN MOTHERHOOD BLOGS

A netnographic study

Marketing
Master's thesis
August 2013
Supervisor: Pekka Tuominen

Riikka Mäkinen

ABSTRACT

University of Tampere School of Management, marketing

Author: MÄKINEN, RIIKKA
Title: SOCIAL INTERACTION IN MOTHERHOOD BLOGS.
A netnographic study
Master's thesis: 84 pages, 3 appendix pages
Date: August 2013
Key words: social interaction, blogs, discussion frames, netnography

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze social interaction in Finnish motherhood blogs. Blogs are a part of a larger phenomenon of user-generated content (UGC), which refers to all different forms of media content that are publicly available on the Internet and created by end-users. UGC has fundamentally changed the world of entertainment, communication, and information by providing different peer-to-peer and information search tools. This study focuses specifically on insite interactivity in personal blogs. The popularity of motherhood blogs in the blogosphere has rocketed during the past couple of years and today mommy bloggers can be seen as one of the most influential blogger subgroups.

Theoretical framework for this study was constructed from the motives for engaging in UGC and the outcomes of doing so. The main motivations for consuming and participating in UGC were social aspects, information search, entertainment and inspiration, and economic incentives. Motivations for producing UGC were self-expression, social aspects, information dissemination, entertainment, and economic and professional incentives. Bloggers and blog readers are intimately related through the writing, reading, and commenting of blog entries. Mommy blogs are especially communal in nature because the members are primarily searching for information as well as peer support from the Internet. Discussion frames identified in previous research form the basis for the outcomes of engaging in UGC. Discussion frames in the context of UGC were social networking, drawing inspiration, sharing knowledge, providing peer support, negotiating norms, and opposing values.

Netnography, a purely observational qualitative research method, was chosen as the research method because it is designed to exploring cultures and communities that emerge through computer-mediated communications. The study followed the flow of the netnographic research process. The blog Lähiömutsi was selected based on the six criteria for evaluating online communities and sites as potential research objects. During the blog observation, blog entries from the beginning of December 2012 to the end of March 2013 were retrieved from the blog's archives along with the comments they had received. Total collected data amounted to 211 pages, containing 54 blog entries and 1377 comments. Data was analyzed using categorization.

Eight discussion frames, namely introducing and welcoming, exchanging courtesies, drawing inspiration, searching for information, sharing knowledge, providing peer support, expressing opinions, and opposing values, emerged from the data. It was observed that controversial and sensitive topics attract the largest number of comments and that positive and negative comments raise the overall number of comments.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tampereen yliopisto Johtamiskorkeakoulu, yrityksen taloustiede, markkinointi

Tekijä: MÄKINEN, RIIKKA
Tutkielman nimi: SOSIAALINEN VUOROVAIKUTUS ÄITIYSBLOGEISSA.
Netnografinen tutkimus

Pro gradu -tutkielma: 84 sivua, 3 liitesivua
Aika: Elokuu 2013
Avainsanat: sosiaalinen vuorovaikutus, blogit, keskustelurungot, netnografia

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on kuvata ja analysoida sosiaalista vuorovaikutusta suomalaisissa äitiysblogeissa. Blogit ovat osa laajempaa käyttäjälähtöisen sisällön ilmiötä. Käyttäjälähtöinen sisältö, joka viittaa Internetissä kaikkien saatavilla olevaan loppukäyttäjien luomaan mediasisältöön, on muuttanut käsityksemme viihteestä, vuorovaikutuksesta ja tiedonhausta tarjoamalla erilaisia työkaluja niin käyttäjien väliseen vuorovaikutukseen kuin tiedonhakuun. Tämä tutkimus keskittyy nimenomaan tarkastelemaan henkilökohtaisten blogien sisäistä vuorovaikutusta. Äitiysblogien suosio on kasvanut viime vuosien aikana räjähdysmäisesti ja äitiysbloggaajat voidaankin nähdä yhtenä blogosfäärin vaikutusvaltaisimmista bloggaajien ryhmistä.

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys muodostettiin motiiveista osallistua käyttäjälähtöiseen sisältöön sekä osallistumisen seurauksista. Pääasialliset motiivit lukemiseen ja osallistumiseen olivat sosiaaliset hyödyt, tiedonhaku, viihde ja inspiraatio sekä taloudelliset kannustimet. Käyttäjälähtöistä sisältöä luomaan motivoi itseilmaisuus, sosiaaliset hyödyt, tiedonjako, viihde sekä taloudelliset ja ammatilliset kannustimet. Blogien ympärille voi muodostua tiiviitä blogiyhteisöjä. Äitiysblogit ovat luonteeltaan erityisen yhteisöllisiä, sillä niiden jäsenet hakevat blogeista ja Internetistä tietoa ja vertaistukea. Aiemmassa tutkimuksessa tunnistetut keskustelurungot muodostivat perustan käyttäjälähtöiseen sisältöön osallistumisen seurauksista. Käyttäjälähtöisen sisällön kontekstissa tunnistetut keskustelurungot olivat sosiaalinen verkottuminen, inspiraation hakeminen, tiedon jakaminen, vertaistuen tarjoaminen, normien neuvottelemineen sekä arvojen vastakkainasettelu.

Netnografia, havainnointiin perustuva kvalitatiivinen tutkimusmenetelmä, valittiin tutkimusmenetelmäksi, sillä se on suunniteltu tietokonevälitteisen vuorovaikutuksen ja nettiyhteisöjen tutkimiseen. Tutkimuksen toteuttaminen seurasi netnografisen tutkimusprosessin pääpiirteitä. Kuuden arviointikriteerin perusteella tutkittavaksi valittiin äitiysblogi Lähiömutsi. Havainnoinnin aikana blogin arkistosta kerättiin blogikirjoitukset sekä niiden saamat kommentit joulukuun 2012 ja maaliskuun 2013 väliseltä ajalta. Yhteensä dataa tallennettiin 211 sivua, joka koostui 54 blogitekstistä ja 1377 kommentista. Data analysoitiin käyttäen kategorisointia.

Aineistosta tunnistettiin kahdeksan keskustelurunkoa: esittäytyminen ja tervetulleeksi toivottaminen, kohteliaisuuksien vaihtaminen, inspiraation hakeminen, tiedonhaku, tiedonjako, vertaistuen tarjoaminen, mielipiteiden ilmaiseminen sekä arvojen vastakkainasettelu. Lisäksi huomattiin, että kirjoitukset kiistanalaisista ja aroista aiheista ovat kommentoiduimpia ja että positiiviset ja negatiiviset kommentit nostavat kommenttien kokonaismäärää.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 The concept of user-generated content	6
1.2 Blogs in the field of user-generated content	9
1.3 The purpose of the study and research questions	12
2 USER-GENERATED CONTENT AND INTERACTION.....	15
2.1 The appeal of user-generated content	15
2.1.1 Motives for consuming and participating	15
2.1.2 Motives for producing	18
2.1.3 Interdependence of consuming, participating, and producing	22
2.2 Interaction around user-generated content	23
2.2.1 Social interaction in the blogosphere	23
2.2.2 Discussion practices in virtual communities	26
2.3 Synthesis of the theoretical framework	30
3 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH.....	32
3.1 Netnography as a research method	32
3.2 Flow of the netnographic research process.....	35
3.2.1 Selection of blog	36
3.2.2 Blog observation and data generation	39
3.2.3 Data analysis and interpretation	40
3.2.4 Writing, reporting, and presenting findings	42
3.3 Evaluation of the study	42
4 THE INTERACTIVE NATURE OF MOTHERHOOD BLOGS.....	46
4.1 Discussion frames in motherhood blogs.....	46
4.1.1 Introducing and welcoming.....	46
4.1.2 Exchanging courtesies	48
4.1.3 Drawing inspiration	51
4.1.4 Searching for information	53
4.1.5 Sharing knowledge	56
4.1.6 Providing peer support	59
4.1.7 Expressing opinions	61
4.1.8 Opposing values	63
4.2 Entries attracting attention.....	66
4.3 Conclusions and re-evaluation of the theoretical framework	68
5 SUMMARY	72
REFERENCES	78
APPENDICES.....	85
APPENDIX 1: Comment area of Lähiömutsi	85
APPENDIX 2: Reader to reader interaction in Lähiömutsi	86
APPENDIX 3: Data-rich comment in Lähiömutsi	87
APPENDIX 4: Entries that received 51 or more comments	87

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Discussion practices in virtual communities	26
Figure 2	Archetypes of consumer conversations around user-generated advertisements	28
Figure 3	Synthesis of the theoretical framework	31
Figure 4	The netnographic research process	35
Figure 5	A spectrum of different types of netnography	39
Figure 6	Social interaction in motherhood blogs	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Motives for consuming and participating in UGC	15
Table 2	Motives for producing UGC	19
Table 3	Evaluation of the selected blog	37
Table 4	Ensuring the quality of the study	43
Table 5	Number of comments per entry	66

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The concept of user-generated content

Today, the Internet can be viewed as an alternative to real life in terms of socialization, communication, knowledge creation, and consumption (Heinonen 2011, 356; Seraj 2012, 209). Consumers have started to move away from traditional media, giving more attention to interactive media (Daugherty et al. 2008, 16). The new media has dramatically changed the way consumers communicate with each other and how they gather and exchange information about products and services (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 311, 318). Rather than giving greater power to marketers, the digital innovations have empowered consumers by providing them with different peer-to-peer and information search tools as well as with mobile platforms (Deighton & Kornfeld 2009, 4; Heinonen 2011, 362). Consumers place more and more importance on peer reviews and are likely to adopt opinions and decisions from other consumers. This decreases the influence of traditional marketing and advertising while increasing the impact of user-generated content. (Bagozzi & Dholakia 2002, 18)

In broad terms, user-generated content can be seen as an umbrella term used to describe all the different forms of media content that are publicly available on the Internet and created by end-users (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, 61). The term user-generated content made its mark in 2005 but other terms, which emphasize slightly different aspects of the phenomenon, have also been used. User-created content (see e.g. Wunsch-Vincent & Vickery 2006) is basically used as a synonym to user-generated content although some quarters (see e.g. Sanastokeskus TSK ry 2010, 30) make a distinction between the two concepts by suggesting that user-created content refers to content that has been created by users from scratch whereas user-generated content is something that users generate from content that already exists on the Internet. User-generated content as a term is more common and used generally to refer simultaneously to both of these instances. Replacing a neutral term user, Muniz and Schau (2007) used the term consumer-generated content in the context of vigilante marketing, emphasizing the consumer-brand relationship. Shao (2009) as well as Blackshaw and Nazzaro (2006), on the other

hand, substituted the term media for content in their user-generated media and consumer-generated media because, according to them, the phenomenon acts like paid media (Blackshaw 2007). The concept of user-generated content (UGC) was chosen to be used in this study because of its dominance in the academic literature. Here, UGC refers to creating and generating content either from scratch or by combining existing elements.

Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery (2006, 8) have proposed three essential characteristics for UGC. Firstly, in order for a work to be considered UGC, it needs to be published on the Internet for all Internet users or to a selected group of people. Secondly, a work has to contain a certain amount of creative effort, meaning that users' own value to the work must be evident. Thirdly, a work has to be created outside of professional routines and practices in order to be UGC. Stoeckl et al. (2007, 399) have also listed three characteristics of their own to define UGC. According to them, the most striking characteristic of UGC is the fact that consumers have now become the producers. In addition, production of UGC occurs without a direct profit motivation. Finally, UGC is mass media orientated, as it is produced for an uncertain number of recipients. Hence, both definitions underline amateur consumers as the new producers of content as well as UGC's mass media orientation but the first definition emphasizes the creative aspects more while the second stresses the absence of direct economic incentives.

UGC builds on the technical and ideological foundations of Web 2.0, a term used since 2004 to describe the new way of utilizing the Internet, i.e. the transition from one-way to interactive web. UGC has been available since the early 1980's but Web 2.0 has made it fundamentally different since it allows the content of Internet to be created and continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative way. Another term that is closely related to UGC is social media, which can be defined as a group of applications that allow the creation of UGC. (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, 60–62; Sanastokeskus TSK ry 2010, 14–15) The applications of social media differ from traditional web applications by allowing users to network, converse, share media, and create and upload content (Parent et al. 2011, 220). Recognizing that their classification is not lasting since social media evolves constantly and new applications are sure to emerge in the future, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 62) have divided the applications of social media into six categories: blogs, collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), social

networking sites (e.g. Facebook), content communities (e.g. YouTube), virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life), and virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft).

As statistics show, global usage of UGC sites is ubiquitous (Hoffman & Novak 2012, 69). Social networking site Facebook has more than a billion monthly active users and up to 618 million daily active users (Facebook 2013). Each month, video-sharing website YouTube has more than a billion unique visitors, who upload 72 hours of video content to the service every minute (Youtube 2013). Microblogging service Twitter has 200 million active users who share 400 tweets every day (Twitter 2013) and Tumblr, a microblogging platform and social networking site, has more than 100 million individual blogs (Tumblr 2013). Statistics also support the emergence of a new trend; Mobile Web 2.0 that allows the expansion of social media applications to mobile devices (Kaplan & Haenlein 2013, 70). Though smartphones, consumers can reach and be reached by almost everyone anywhere and anytime (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 311). Almost 70 per cent of Facebook's monthly active users use the mobile application (Facebook 2013) while the same number for Twitter users is 60 per cent (Twitter 2013).

Although the influence of UGC on the world at large is still somewhat unclear, it is safe to say that UGC is fundamentally changing the world of entertainment, communication, and information (Shao 2009, 8). Social media applications continue to proliferate both in sheer volume and in breadth as new types of social media applications continue to emerge (Hoffman & Novak 2012, 69–70). The existence of different consumer communities online implies that power is shifting from marketers and flowing to consumers (Kozinets 1999, 258). Consumers nowadays contribute to all parts of the value chain, from articulation of reviews and opinions to extensive co-creation of products and software (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010, 312). In 2006, Time Magazine selected you, the people who create UGC, as its “Person of the Year” because Time was impressed by the community and collaboration that has emerged on the Internet. Through Web 2.0 and UGC, users from all over the world are able to help and entertain each other for no tangible reward and build a new kind of international understanding. (Grossman 2006)

1.2 Blogs in the field of user-generated content

Herring et al. (2005, 142) define blogs, abbreviation for weblogs, as “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence”, the most recent entry appearing first. Blogs, representing the earliest form of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, 63), typically consist of text and photos, but may contain other multimedia content as well (Nardi et al. 2004, 222). Another essential characteristic of blogs is that they allow the readers to comment on the entries, facilitating conversation between and among bloggers and the audience (Chopin 2008, 554). Emphasizing the personal nature of blogs, Kozinets (2006b, 137) defines blogs as offshoots of personal web-pages. What is missing from personal web-pages compared to blogs, however, are the interactive components and frequent publishing (Karlsson 2006, 10). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 63) manage to take interaction into account somewhat better by describing blogs as social media equivalent of personal web pages.

In 2012, 34 per cent of Finnish men and 42 per cent of Finnish women stated that they read blogs, the most active blog readers being aged between 16 and 34 (Tilastokeskus). The number of blogs has increased exponentially since free and easy-to-use blogging software that all Internet users could use was launched in late 1999 (Karlsson 2006, 1). The popularity of blogs can be explained by consumers’ need for interactive, social content (Li & Chignell 2010, 589). Due to the substantial number of blogs, different blog portals, where bloggers can add their blog and readers can search among them with different key words, have been set up (Bloglovin’; Blogilista). In Finland, more than 50 000 blogs are registered to the most extensive blog portal in the country, Blogilista¹ (Blogilista). All the blogs together with the hyperlinks between them form the so called blogosphere (Sanastokeskus TSK ry 2010, 32).

The most recent extension of blogs are microblogs, such as Twitter (Kozinets 2010, 86) that allows the user to tweet, i.e. send a message, only 140 characters at a time. Twitter, like other social networking and UGC-sites, can easily be used alongside blogging. According to a Finnish survey conducted in 2011, 20 per cent of bloggers have a separate Twitter account for their blog. Using Facebook together with blogging is even

¹ Blogilista means Bloglist.

more common as 42 per cent of bloggers have a Facebook page for their blog. (Blogibarometri 2011) These social networking sites are mainly used for promoting the blog (Blogibarometri 2011) but they can also be used for shorter updates that would not otherwise be published in blogs (Lähiömutsi Facebook). In addition, 18 per cent of bloggers make use of different video-sharing sites (Blogibarometri 2011).

Baumer et al. (2008, 1119) state that rather than being a genre, blogs are a medium for multi-dimensional communication. Chopin (2008, 555) also associates the sense of community to blogging; in addition to the comment feature the blog is connected to other blogs. Consequently, interactivity in blogs can be divided into two dimensions: crossblog interactivity and insite interactivity. Crossblog interactivity refers to conversations between blogs. It can occur as blogroll links that are located in the blog's sidebar and point to blogs that the blogger follows or as citation links that are within an entry and point to other blogs or particular entries. (Ali-Hasan & Adamic 2007; Efimova & de Moor 2005, 1; Karlsson 2006, 38–39) In addition, links can be used to direct readers to non-blog web sites (Herring et al. 2005, 154). Insite interactivity, on the other hand, refers to readers' responses to the blog entry through comments (Karlsson 2006, 38–39).

Roles of the players in the blogging context are rather ambiguous. It is not possible to make a strict distinction between bloggers and blog readers because many bloggers also read and comment on others' blogs. (Baumer et al. 2008, 1112; Schmidt 2007, 1414) However, this overlapping of roles is in fact advantageous for the interaction in blogs; when both parties have a blog of their own, the place for dialogue can expand from insite interactivity to crossblog interactivity (Karlsson 2006, 2, 38–39). Commenting in another blog is an easy way to contribute to a conversation but reacting in one's own blog by posting an entry allows the blogger to elaborate the subject further (Efimova & de Moor 2005, 9).

Blood (2002) divides blogs into two types, filter blogs and personal blogs. Filter blogs consist primarily of links to other online information sources and the blogger's opinions of news in question. Personal blogs, on the contrary, resemble more like journals or diaries in which the bloggers report on their lives and feelings. (Blood 2002) Bloggers' personality is reflected through various linguistic characteristics that blog readers are

able to decipher, thus making constructions on their personality (Li & Chignell 2010, 591, 599). Written from a personal perspective and expressing the bloggers' subjective perceptions, the function of personal blogs is more reflective and geared towards the formation of virtual communities (Blood 2002). Herring et al. (2005, 151) discovered that personal blogs are the most common blog type, accounting for as much as 70 per cent of all blogs. Personal blogs deal with a wide variety of topics and, hence, specific blog contexts, such as fashion, cooking, sport, and motherhood, have become differentiated.

The number of motherhood blogs, commonly referred to as mommy blogs both in the online environment and in academic writing, in the blogosphere has rocketed during the past few years (Morrison 2010). As Lopez (2009, 729) declares: "Mommy bloggers have officially invaded the blogosphere, luring thousands of readers daily to websites that document countless tales of parenting joys and woes." Mommy blogs do not only deal with motherhood and children but, instead, cover an extremely wide range of topics (Lopez 2009, 734). In 2010, Technorati, a respected authority in the blogging world, named mommy bloggers as one of the most influential blogger subgroups (Technorati 2010). The phenomenon of mommy bloggers has also reached Finland and, as a consequence, mommy blogs have now been included amongst the blogs that are surveyed for the annual Finnish blog barometer (Blogibarometri 2012).

The popularity of mommy blogs has been explained by their truthfulness; mommy bloggers are creating a more realistic picture of motherhood to what is normally seen in the mainstream media (Lopez 2009, 732). The women of today approach motherhood from a radically different position than generations before (Morrison 2010) and the Internet has given more power to mothers by allowing them to take part in redefining motherhood (Turun Sanomat 2013). By daring to bring up taboos and difficulties of motherhood, mommy blogs provide support and solidarity to other mothers (Lopez 2009, 732). The language used in mommy blogs is informal and narrative, often spiced up with humor and levity for entertaining purposes (Lopez 2009, 734). In fact, research has revealed that the language use in computer-mediated communications in general is remarkably playful (Baym 2002, 66). The readers of mommy blogs are stated to feel closeness and loyalty to the blogger due to the personal feel of the writing (Lopez 2009, 734).

The potential of blogs as a new medium for marketing has also been noticed (Blogibarometri 2012). Today, blogs are an effective way of distributing information because they attract tremendous attention among consumers and may even exert influence on society at large (Hsu & Lin 2008, 65). What also makes blogs an attractive medium for marketing is their personal touch; consumer to consumer interaction that occurs in blogs is often perceived as more trustworthy than traditional advertising (Bagozzi & Dholakia 2002, 18; Turun Sanomat 2012). Popular bloggers can be defined as the opinion leaders of online environment (Chen 2010, 29). Mothers are especially attractive consumer group because they often make purchases on behalf of their entire family. (Lopez 2009, 739–740) Advertising in blogs, however, is a matter that invokes strong feelings. Some readers, and bloggers alike, condemn advertising in blogs in the fear that it will affect the content and the trustworthiness of blogs negatively. (Lopez 2009, 740–741) Bloggers who do participate in blog advertising emphasize that they only collaborate with companies that they like and believe in.

1.3 The purpose of the study and research questions

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze social interaction in Finnish motherhood blogs. More precisely, this study focuses on exploring social interaction between blogger and blog readers in blog's comment area. In order to reach the purpose of the study, the following research questions are presented:

1. What kind of discussion frames can be identified among the comments that follow blog entries?
2. What kind of entries receive the largest number of comments?

Research to date has mainly focused on studying why people engage in virtual communities and what are the consequences of doing so. However, the way community members interact with each other remains largely unknown. de Valck et al. (2009) studied the functioning of virtual communities and, more precisely, highlighted what is actually being shared in them. The researchers concluded that as they focused on studying “traditional” virtual communities, research on more recently developed forms of communities, such as blogs, is needed. As Kozinets (2006b, 131) suggests: “blogs, or

web logs, in particular are ascendant right now as a forum for individual information that becomes a focus of communal response”.

Blogs are not a solo activity but a medium for multi-directional communication between bloggers and readers (Baumer et al. 2008, 1119). Therefore it is surprising that most research on blogs has focused on blog writing and the blogger, rather than on the role of the reader in the blogging process (Baumer et al. 2008, 1111; Huang et al. 2008, 351; Morrison 2011, 39). In order to fully understand the activity of blogging, the readers and their interactions with the blog and the blogger must also be studied (Baumer et al. 2008, 1111). Baumer et al. (2008, 1119) suggest that future research should explore interaction from both the blogger's and the reader's perspectives as well as study interactions between blog readers. Li and Chignell (2010, 590) also express that research should investigate how blogs affect consumers' social behavior.

New product and service ideas can be sourced from the content of consumers' online messages as they discuss their preferences, what is important to them, what could be improved in the existing products, and what kind of products are missing from the market altogether (Kozinets 2006a, 286–287). In addition to positive statements, negative comments and even resistant activity that are directed to damage brands can occur in virtual communities (Kozinets 1999, 258). Nonetheless, relevant and up-to-date consumer information and can be gained through analyzing blogs. Being deeply personal, blogs also offer rich, longitudinal data about consumers, their consumption practices and the roles that certain products or services play in their lives. (Kozinets 2006b, 137–138) Blogs also offer guidelines for segmentation as consumers themselves select which blogs they follow based on their attraction (Kozinets 2006a, 287).

As more and more users get involved in blogging, the range of topics discussed in blogs will continue to expand (Chopin 2008, 553). Therefore, specific blog contexts, such as motherhood blogs, should be studied. Different blog groups may differ from each other quite significantly. (Baumer et al. 2008, 1119) As mentioned before, motherhood blogs have gained favour with a wide range of blog readers during the past couple of years (Morrison 2010), both globally and in Finland. Mothers of under three-year-old children are extremely active online, visiting discussion forums frequently and spending long times communicating with others (Karvonen 2013, 30). Motherhood blogs are

extremely suitable subjects of research in the context of UGC since mothers represent “normal” consumers, not celebrities. In addition, research has demonstrated that motherhood blogs are extremely communal in nature (Technorati 2010).

Very few studies have looked into the content of comments and discussion that take place in virtual communities, let alone blogs. Hence, this study is inductive in nature and the main results are largely based on the naturally occurring data. Motives for engaging in UGC are discussed as they can help in categorizing the comments in the blogs’ comment areas. In addition, social interaction on the Internet and in the blogging context is examined and discussion frames around UGC explored to provide more insight in the categorization.

As mentioned before, mommy blogs cover a wide range of topics. Therefore, entries that do not concern children or motherhood will be ruled out from the analysis. This study will mainly focus on insite interactivity by analyzing the blog’s comment area. As bloggers are likely to comment on other’s blogs, it is likely that parts of crossblog interactivity will also be present in the comments. However, whether the comments have been written by sole readers or other bloggers is not considered to be relevant for the purposes of this study and therefore all comments will be treated equally. In this study, blog readers are defined to be readers of a specific blog, may they be bloggers or sole readers.

2 USER-GENERATED CONTENT AND INTERACTION

2.1 The appeal of user-generated content

Consumers vary in the way they make use of UGC. Shao (2008, 9) has identified three types of UGC users; consumers, participants, and producers. Consumers are “lurkers” who only watch, read, or view but do not express their presence whereas participants interact with the content and/or with other users on UGC sites. Producers are the active creators and publishers of UGC. These different uses of UGC are driven by different motives, which are presented in the following sub-chapters.

2.1.1 Motives for consuming and participating

To understand the ever growing popularity of UGC, the motives for consuming and participating in it need to be reviewed. Four motives, which are summarized in table 1 and presented in more detail after it, were identified in the literature review.

Table 1 Motives for consuming and participating in UGC

Motive	Definition
Social aspects	Interacting with like-minded people and searching for peer support.
Information search	Reviewing other consumer's experiences intentionally or by chance.
Entertainment and inspiration	Habitual reading as a leisure time activity and applying ideas to one's own life.
Economic incentives	Participating in lotteries in the hope of winning something.

Social aspects

Shao (2009, 12) states that users participate in UGC to fulfill their social interaction needs. Users can interact with the content, for example by rating the content or posting comments, and/or with other users, for example through messaging, in UGC sites. Moreover, Huang et al. (2008, 354) suggested that affective exchange, as they named social interaction, is the most important motive for reading blogs because it is the element that differentiates blogs from other online discussion groups. By reading their

friends' blogs, people can express their care and keep in contact with them. Furthermore, commenting on blogs is a way of expressing one's feelings.

Social benefits were also evident in the study conducted by Baumer et al. (2008). When asked to define what a blog is, 13 out of 15 interviewees stressed interactional attributes rather than structural features. The interviewees also felt that they were a part of the blog they read in some way. Being a part of the blog is not as straightforward a concept as one might think. As Baumer et al. (2008, 1118) explain: "Being part of a blog is more than consistent readership, a sense of community, or a feeling of connectedness, although it includes all those things." In addition, different readers have their own interpretations of the concept; some readers may feel that they are a part of a blog even without participating in it.

Participation in UGC, particularly in user-to-user interaction, may also contribute to the development of virtual communities. Nevertheless, user-to-content interaction can also develop virtual communities, as responses from other users encourage participants to post new material. (Shao 2009, 13) Focusing on one specific format of UGC, namely electronic word-of-mouth, Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003) studied motives for reading other customer's articulations from web-based consumer opinion platforms. Their study highlighted the importance of community membership and stated that people enjoy belonging to virtual communities. Virtual communities enable communicating with people who share similar interests and opinions. It can also be truly relieving for people to know that they are not the only ones struggling with certain difficult problems. (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh 2003, 58)

Huang et al. (2008, 353) named one of the motives they identified as the "bandwagon effect". This motive includes reading popular blogs, as well as single blog entries that have gained popularity. In some cases reader's motives may be driven by other users' opinions rather than his or her own interests, because someone who does not read a certain popular blog might feel or be treated as an outsider. Thus, this motive can be seen as containing some degree of social pressure.

Information search

According to Shao (2009, 10), an essential motive for consuming UGC is information seeking, which is driven by people's desire to increase their knowledge of the surrounding world in general. Furthermore, both Baumer et al. (2008, 1115) and Huang et al. (2008, 353) discovered that information search is one of the motives for visiting and reading blogs. Some people intentionally read blogs in order to gain new knowledge but consumers might as well run into a blog or another UGC site when searching for information. As Blackshaw & Nazzaro (2006, 4) point out, UGC has dramatically influenced the concept of searching because UGC sites will just as likely emerge from the online search results as corporate sites.

Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003, 58) found that people read other customers' online articulations in order to obtain buying-related information as well as to learn how to consume a product. Obtaining buying-related information takes place before the actual purchase of goods or use of services. The experiences of others might help consumers to make decisions they otherwise perceive as risky and, at the same time, consumers feel that getting information on products, services, and their quality is faster from UGC sites than from elsewhere. Moreover, people turn to UGC sites when they are having difficulties with their products and are in need of advice.

Entertainment and inspiration

Huang et al. (2008, 353) discovered that people read blogs as a leisure time activity without any specific purpose. Sometimes blog reading functions as a way of preventing boredom, because it is often considered to be fun and amusing. Similarly, Shao (2009, 11) identifies entertainment as a motive for consuming UGC and lists enjoyment, relaxing, filling time, and seeking emotional release as entertainment ends.

Baumer et al. (2008, 1115) also agree that entertainment is amongst the motives for reading blogs. Some of their interviewees described blogs as newspapers or magazines while others referred to them as diaries or journals (Baumer et al. 2008, 1116). Similarly to browsing through a magazine, readers can read the blog entries that interest them at a convenient time and skip over entries that they do not find interesting or entertaining. Baumer et al. (2008, 1113–1114) also point out that blog reading is often habitual in nature and can be considered as part of an Internet ritual.

Seeking for inspiration can also be regarded as a motive for reading blogs (Baumer et al. 2008, 1113). Blog readers are inspired by, for example, the clothes and the decorative elements they see in a blog's pictures. If not already mentioned, readers often enquire where the items have been bought and express their urge to obtain similar products. Therefore, blogs can inspire readers to acquire things they did not know they needed or wanted before reading the blog entry. Similarly, blogs may inspire readers to start eating healthier and paying more attention to the ecological aspects of consumption, to name but a few examples.

Economic incentives

Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003, 58) identify remuneration, i.e. monetary compensation, as a motivational factor for reading other customer's online articulations because many opinion platforms actually reward consumers directly or indirectly. Purely monetary rewards are not, however, present in blogging context but bloggers may occasionally arrange product or gift card lotteries. The blogger has usually received the raffled products or gift cards directly from companies who are hoping to increase their coverage among the blog readers.

Lottery entries are usually among the most commented entries of the blog. The large number of comments that these entries receive can partly be explained by economic reasons. The consumers of UGC, who normally only read blogs, may exceptionally comment on the lottery entries in the hope of winning something. Thus, it is not the urge for social interaction but rather economic incentives that drive the consumers to participate in the blog.

2.1.2 Motives for producing

In addition to knowing why users consume and participate in UGC, it is important to discover why UGC is created. The literature review revealed five motives for producing UGC. These motives are summarized in table 2 and discussed then in more detail.

Table 2 Motives for producing UGC

Motive	Definition
Self-expression	Documenting parts of one's own life and experiences.
Social aspects	Communicating with friends and like-minded people and releasing emotional tension.
Information dissemination	Expressing one's values, opinions and experiences.
Entertainment	Finding blogging fun and enjoyable.
Economic and professional incentives	Pursuing monetary rewards or new career opportunities.

Self-expression

According to Shao (2009, 14) users produce UGC for self-expression and self-actualization. Both concepts are ultimately related to constructing one's identity; self-expression stands for expressing one's own identity and individuality while self-actualization refers to constructing one's identity unconsciously. Jung et al. (2007, 28) got similar results when studying motives for maintaining a blog-like personal mini-homepage. Self-expression, which in their study referred to providing personal information, was found among the motives for hosting mini-homepages.

On the Internet, users are able to carefully construct the identity they wish to convey to others (Chen 2010, 29). Users can choose whether they want to express original or alternative forms of the self (Jung et al. 2007, 30). Bloggers, especially in the lifestyle and fashion context, have sometimes been criticized of portraying their lives as too perfect. However, lifestyle blogs are typically positive in nature and bloggers deliberately leave certain personal or unpleasant issues out of the blog. Readers must bear in mind that a blog portrays not more than a glimpse to the bloggers actual life; they only see as much as the blogger chooses to reveal.

In addition to providing personal information, the self-expression motive refers to documenting one's everyday life and keeping a record of one's experiences (Stoeckl et al. 2007, 406). Because blog entries are often illustrated with photos of the activities, blogs can be seen as kinds of modern photo albums. This is something that serves both the blogger, as the blog stores their memories, and his or her friends and relatives, who

can keep track of the bloggers' activities and whereabouts through the blog. (Nardi et al. 2004, 225)

Social aspects

For bloggers, blogging can serve many social purposes. Keeping friends and relatives informed of one's activities serves a social purpose as well, because the information in the blog efficiently reaches large number of people (Nardi et al. 2004, 226). Daugherty et al. (2008, 23) suggested that producers of UGC are motivated by the social function, because they feel the need to communicate with like-minded people and experience a sense of community. More precisely, Stoeckl et al. (2007, 407) and Jung et al. (2007, 28) discovered that the desire to communicate and to stay in touch with others is a strong motive for blogging.

Nardi et al. (2004, 227) observed that, to some extent, blogging is a way of releasing emotional tension. For bloggers, blogs are a place where they can express themselves freely about things they feel passionate or obsessive about. Some bloggers acknowledged that certain things can be easier to communicate through a blog than in other ways. In a blog entry, bloggers are able to say exactly the things they wish to say without being interrupted and also carefully choose the right words and tone. (Nardi et al. 2004, 228)

Information dissemination

Stoeckl et al. (2007, 406–407) identified information dissemination as one motive for blogging. As bloggers write about their everyday life, they unavoidably share information. Information dissemination and giving advice can also be deliberate and bloggers may even suggest specific actions for the readers to take (Nardi 2004, 226). Blog entries naturally reflect the opinions and values of the blogger. Consequently, Daugherty et al. (2008, 22) suggest that, for the producers, UGC is a means for expressing their individual thoughts.

Henning-Thurau et al. (2004, 46) discovered that concern for other customers was a strong motive for articulating one's opinions in web-based opinion platforms. Information providers wanted to share their positive experiences and that way give others the opportunity to buy good products. In addition, they also wanted to warn

others of bad products and save them from having the same negative experiences. As mentioned earlier, blogs are usually quite positive in nature. If bad experiences are expressed in blog entries, names of the companies in question are rarely mentioned. Positive emotions and experiences are expressed more often and in those cases, the name of the company is naturally mentioned.

Entertainment

An essential motive for producing UGC and for blogging is entertainment. Bloggers choose to blog because they find it fun and enjoyable. As in reading blogs, the actual practice of blogging can also become a habit. Blogging can be a way of passing time when bored or when the user has nothing better to do. (Jung et al. 2007, 28; Stoeckl et al. 2007, 406) However, as the popularity of the blog increases, the motive of passing time, which almost has a negative tone in it, becomes unquestionable. Popular bloggers are swamped with inquiries and proposals from companies and, as a consequence, they spend a great deal of their free time on blog-related activities.

Economic and professional incentives

Advertising in blogs and collaboration between bloggers and companies are issues that stir up powerful emotions. There have been long discussions about the acceptability and ethicality of blog advertising in the blogosphere (see e.g. Nelliinan vaatehuone 2012; Turun Sanomat 2012). Some readers accept blog advertising and believe that the bloggers express their true opinions even if the blog entry is done in collaboration with a certain company. Others, in contrast, feel deceived and suspect subliminal advertising even in entries that have not been affected by companies.

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004, 46) identified economic incentives as a motive for articulating opinions in web-based consumer opinion platforms because, in some cases, the platform operator may actually remunerate the information provider. A few years ago Stoeckl et al. (2007, 407) graded economic incentives, at least in purely monetary terms, negligible in the blogging context. However, blogging culture has gone through some drastic changes after that. Nowadays approximately one fourth of Finnish bloggers get a monthly salary from blogging and the number of those who benefit from blogging by receiving free products or services is even bigger. An ever increasing number of bloggers wish to turn blogging into their profession. (Blogibarometri 2012)

Participating in affiliate marketing programs offers bloggers a relatively easy way to earn money. The idea of affiliate marketing is that bloggers, who in this context are the affiliates, place links in their blogs through which the readers move to the advertiser's Internet site. Thus, the bloggers only participate in the marketing activity. If the reader then makes a purchase, the company will compensate the blogger according to their agreement. The compensation may, for example, be a certain percentage of the purchase. The importance of affiliate marketing is likely to increase in the future. (Duffy 2005, 161–163)

More than economic rewards, however, bloggers seem to appreciate the opportunities for professional advancement (Jung et al. 2007, 28). Collaboration with companies offers bloggers new professional challenges as they are asked, for example, to write articles in magazines and to appear on TV shows. The professionalization of blogging can also be seen in the way bloggers view themselves. Up to 47 per cent of Finnish bloggers define themselves as experts, while the number in 2009 was only 24 per cent. (Blogibarometri 2012)

2.1.3 Interdependence of consuming, participating, and producing

Although the three UGC usages of consuming, participating, and producing are analytically separate, they are actually interdependent in reality. Firstly, the three activities may represent a path of gradual involvement with UGC. Users often begin their relationship with UGC as lurking consumers but after familiarizing themselves with the activity, they start to participate through interacting with the content and/or with other users. Finally, users become producers if they publish their own work on UGC sites. (Shao 2009, 15)

One must bear in mind, however, that not all users follow the path of gradual involvement from consuming to participating and producing. Some users might, for example, move straight to publishing their own work from consuming UGC. Furthermore, there may be an involvement inequality among users as most users only consume UGC whereas a minority of them actively engages in participating and producing. (Shao 2009, 15–16; Courtois et al. 2009, 112) This is in line with the classic Pareto principle of 80-20 (Kozinets 1999, 255).

Ali-Hasan and Adamic (2007) as well as Baumer (2008, 1117) point out that most likely all bloggers are also blog readers, i.e. consumers, and possibly participators by commenting on the blogs they read. Therefore, it is not possible to make a clear distinction between the roles as one UGC user might play all three of them depending on the context. Comparing the motives for consuming and participating in UGC with the motives for producing UGC also reveal the interdependence of the roles. Many of the motives, such as social aspects and entertainment, are exactly the same. Information search and information dissemination, on the other hand, represent opposite aspects of the same matter. What sets producers apart from other users is the desire for self-expression.

2.2 Interaction around user-generated content

The following sub-chapters will take a closer look at what happens after the users have made the decision to participate in UGC. At first, interactivity in blogs as well as in mommy blogs in particular will be examined. After that, since communication in the blogging context has not been studied extensively, a closer look will be taken on what is being shared in virtual communities and, additionally, in virtual brand communities.

2.2.1 Social interaction in the blogosphere

Even though blogs may look like personal diaries, they should rather be considered as social activity (Nardi et al. 2004, 222–223). An increasing number of consumers of all ages maintain their social relationships through blogs (Child et al. 2011, 2017). In line with the reader-response theory, a school of literary theory from the 1960's, the blog reader can be seen as not merely a passive recipient of the content, but actively engaging in the process of interpretation. Hence, the reality and meaning of a blog exist only through the reader's interpretation of and interaction with the blog. (Baumer et al. 2008, 1111)

Virtual communities have redefined the traditional concept of personal relationships. In the online environment consumers have the possibility to develop virtual identities that drastically differ from those they have in real life. Coupled with anonymity, this can

lead to highly intimate yet unreal relationships between consumers. (Romm et al. 1997, 268) Contrary to this view, however, Li and Chignell (2010, 599) state that in a blogging context, anonymity can actually encourage consumers to express their true selves more than in real life. Similarly, Baumer et al. (2008, 1116) are of the opinion that blog readers' online and offline identities are tightly intertwined. Their research revealed that blog readers found the sustaining of two completely different identities extremely confusing (Baumer et al. 2008, 2008).

Blogging is socially interactive and community-like in nature because the comment feature enables conversational exchanges between and among bloggers and readers (Savolainen 2011, 73). The possibility to comment is indeed a feature that sets blogs apart from personal diaries to which they have often been compared to (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 103). Herring et al. (2005, 161) have pointed out that communicative exchange between bloggers and blog readers is asymmetrical because it is ultimately the blogger who retains ownership of and control over the blog's content. Unlike in face-to-face communication, the online environment enables bloggers to alter entries that they have already published or to go as far as removing the entire entry (Child et al. 2011, 2017). However, Herring et al. (2005, 162) granted that the comment feature certainly makes blogs interactive and concluded that since blog content can be produced fast and readily, blogs have the potential to fulfill consumers' daily communication needs.

Bloggers and blog readers are intimately related through the writing, reading, and commenting of blog entries (Nardi et al. 2004, 224). Nardi et al. (2004, 224) observed that "blogs create the audience, but the audience also creates the blog". Bloggers craft entries with their audience in mind, write about topics that the readers can relate to (Lopez 2009, 744), and sometimes even prepare entries based on readers' ideas (Nardi 2004, 224). When studying travellers' blogs, Panteli et al. (2011, 373) discovered that even though most of the travellers had started the blog to keep their family and friends updated, the unknown audience played an important role in shaping the blogging community. The bloggers started to tailor their entries to better serve the unknown audience's needs (Panteli et al. 2011, 373). Furthermore, the audience urges bloggers on to continue blogging through low-energy periods (Nardi 2004, 224).

The interactive nature of blogs is also something that blog readers stress. 13 out of 15 interviewees highlighted conversational interaction between blogger and blog readers, not structural features, when asked to define the term “blog”. (Baumer et al. 2008, 1115–1116) Readers expect to have the opportunity to comment on the blog entry: to add information, to express their opinion, or to just greet the blogger (Chopin 2008, 555). While most of the blogs support the comment feature and allow the submitted comments to show in the comment area immediately, moderating the comments is also possible. Moderating means that the blogger goes through all the submitted comments and decides which ones to publish. This naturally hinders the interaction between readers and increases the repetition of similar comments, as readers can see other comments only after the bloggers’ approval. Bloggers might choose to moderate the comments to prevent spam and malicious comments. (Mishne & Glance 2006)

It is evident that blog readers place certain expectations on bloggers but, perhaps surprisingly, blog readers feel that there are certain expectations of them, as well. Some readers feel that they need to comment good entries and actually spend a significant amount of time formulating their comments. (Baumer 2008, 1117) Readers are more likely to interact with bloggers with whom they feel similarity with (Li & Chignell 2010, 599) and rather than as a one-to-many medium, readers perceive blogs as one-to-one communication between them and the blogger (Baumer et al. 2008, 1116). The activity of blogging arguably places social pressure on both bloggers and blog readers (Baumer 2008, 1117).

Unique to mommy bloggers is their enthusiasm for making connections and building communities (Morrison 2011, 38; Technorati 2010). Mommy bloggers are driven by a desire to meet and connect with like-minded people and they are also more likely to comment on and link to other’s blogs than bloggers in general (Technorati 2010). The blog community develops and strengthens over time as bloggers create relationships of trust with their readers through mutual self-disclosure as well as reciprocal reading and commenting (Morrison 2011, 38). The findings of Lu and Lee (2010, 33) support the fact that the development of a blog community takes time. The researchers discovered that a blog is merely a content aggregator for newbies but becomes a social network for those who have been following the blog for a longer period of time. Park et al. (2010, 9) state that in order to frequently participate in blogging, blog readers must find the blog

so entertaining that they lose awareness of time passing by and achieve the state of flow. Flow signifies extremely high emotional involvement with the blog.

When studying commitment in an online pregnancy and mothering community, Ley (2007, 1393) discovered that members joined the community largely to gain information and peer support. Women in the industrialized countries are not receiving as much support from offline friends as women in previous generations did and they often consider the advice of their own mothers dated (Ley 2007, 1395). At the age of Web 2.0 it is only natural that they seek company from the Internet. For some mothers, the Internet might be the only place to meet other mothers. The Internet also removes time and place constraints which can be extremely important to mothers of little babies. (Karvonen 2012, 28) Their daily routines form according to the circadian rhythm of the baby. They may for example be awake during night when others are not, which emphasizes the importance of the Internet in socializing.

2.2.2 Discussion practices in virtual communities

de Valck et al. (2009, 198) analyzed discussion practices, i.e. what is actually being shared in a virtual community and distinguished four main frames of discussion, namely celebrating similarities, sharing knowledge, negotiating community norms, and opposing values (figure 1). These categories are not mutually exclusive but, instead, several discussion frames may be identified in a single posting.

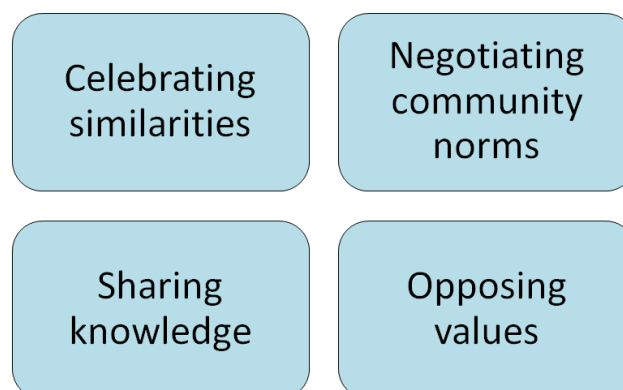


Figure 1 Discussion practices in virtual communities

Reference: de Valck, K., van Bruggen, G. H. & Wierenga, B. 2009, 198–199. Virtual communities: a marketing perspective. *Decision Support Systems*, 47 (3), 185–203.

Celebrating similarities emphasizes the fact that a shared interest is a fundamental part of virtual communities. Despite of the differences between the members, it is the similarities that construct a strong communal atmosphere where the members feel safe to even confess behavior and thoughts that they normally keep hidden in public. (de Valck et al. 2009, 200) The sharing of personal information has also been identified as one of the factors affecting consumer engagement in virtual brand communities (Brodie et al. 2013, 111). Members often use narratives when describing the development of their relationship with the brand (Schau et al. 2009, 45). It is likely that personal information and thoughts are shared in the blogging context as well.

Sharing knowledge refers to posing and answering questions as well as providing explanations and background information. Knowledge is shared because members genuinely want to help others but also to gain prestige. (de Valck et al. 2009, 198) In brand communities, the sharing of information revolves largely around products as members discuss how to take care of the products and how they could be modified to better suit the members' individual needs (Schau et al. 2009, 45). In addition to recommending ways of using products, members might also recommend specific brands to other consumers (Brodie et al. 2013, 111). In the blogging context, discussion about products is likely to be present, but it is expected that knowledge on more intangible matters related to parenting is also shared.

Community members also compare their attitudes and behaviors i.e. negotiate community norms. In addition to merely negotiating norms, members also negotiate how the norm should be put into practice. (de Valck et al. 2009, 198–199) This is something that is present in brand communities as well because members educate the behavioral expectations of the community to new members (Schau et al. 2009, 43). Community members do not always see eye to eye on everything and sometimes conflict arises. This is meant by opposing values, which often becomes concrete in a debate between two groups that have opposite opinions on a certain issue. (de Valck et al. 2009, 199) In brand communities, heated discussion might develop when brands are compared to competing brands, sometimes in a negative tone (Schau et al. 2009, 43). de Valck et al. (2009, 200) limited their analysis to topics about cooking and eating. Therefore, the researchers acknowledge that other discussion frames might emerge from other types of communities.

In a slightly different context, Campbell et al. (2011, 87) studied consumer conversations around user-generated advertisements and identified four archetypes that they termed the inquiry, the laudation, the debate, and the flame (figure 2). The archetypes vary on two dimensions: from conceptual to emotive and from collaborative to oppositionary. First, the response is conceptual when the viewer is interested in how the advertisement was created whereas in an emotional response the reactions to the advertisement are determined by emotion rather than reason. Second, the response can be either collaborative, when the viewer is on the side of the advertisement's creator, or oppositionary, which means that the viewer is hostile towards the advertisement and/or its creator, or, alternatively, those who are opposed to the advertisement. (Campbell et al. 2011, 96)

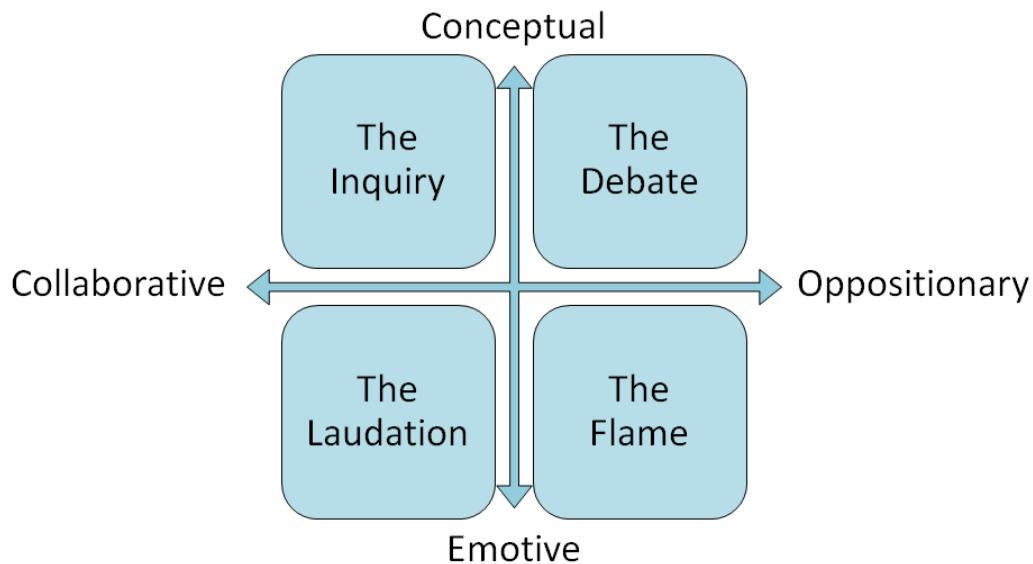


Figure 2 Archetypes of consumer conversations around user-generated advertisements

Reference: Campbell, C., Pitt, L. F., Parent, M. & Berthon, P. R. 2011, 97. Understanding consumer conversations around ads in a web 2.0 world. *Journal of Advertising*, 40 (1), 87–102.

The inquiry, collaborative-conceptual response, refers to a situation where the viewers' response to the advertisement is rather neutral but they still want to gain more information on its details: who created it and why, what is the background music, and so forth (Campbell et al. 2011, 97). This is similar to the sharing of knowledge that de Valck et al. (2009, 198) identified in virtual communities. The laudation is collaborative

as the inquiry but differs from it by being emotive rather than conceptual. The laudation is positive in tone and stands for praising the advertisement in general as well as all its components. (Campbell et al. 2011, 97) These kind of positive statements on the blog entry as well as what the readers see in the pictures are likely to be present in the blogging context as well.

In the debate, oppositionary-collaborative response, different views and opinions are expressed of the advertisement. Discussion is constructive because opinions are validated and facts are presented. In the flame, however, the conversation is more passionate, destructive, and derogatory as it differs from the debate by being emotive, not conceptual. The perspectives of the other viewers are not respected but, if anything, despised. (Campbell et al. 2011, 97) Opposing values, a discussion frame that de Valck et al. (2009, 199) distinguished, falls somewhere in between these two. There are several issues related to motherhood and raising a child that divide the opinions of mothers. Hence, it is expected that differing views are presented in the blog's comment area. However, it is not clear whether the discussion is more geared towards the debate or the laudation or if both are present.

Mishne and Glance (2006) are one of the few researchers that have studied what kinds of comments occur in blogs' comment areas. The researchers focused on exploring controversy in blog discussions and, more precisely, disputative comments that disagree with the blogger. Disputative comments were observed to be rather common, appearing in 21 per cent of the comment threads. The researchers also noticed that disputative comments were longer and appeared especially with political posts implying that topics on which people feel strongly about are more likely to cause disputes.

What is not highlighted in the results of de Valck et al. (2009) and Campbell et al. (2011) is the idea of peer support. Both studies acknowledge that information is being shared but it is not further analyzed. However, Schau et al. (2009, 43) point out that in brand communities, members do lend emotional support to other members. It is expected that peer support is heavily present in the context of mommy blogging because for some mothers the blog may be the only medium for meeting and communicating with other mothers.

2.3 Synthesis of the theoretical framework

Figure 3 illustrates the motives for and the outcomes of engaging in UGC. The motives for engaging in UGC (see e.g. Baumer et al. 2008; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh 2003; Huang et al. 2008; Shao 2009; Stoeckl et al. 2007) are included in the framework because examining why consumers engage in UGC might help to deduce what is actually being shared. The outcomes of engaging in UGC are the discussion frames that were formulated largely based on the literature review on social interaction online as well as discussion frames around UGC (see e.g. Nardi et al. 2004; Morrison 2011; Herring et al. 2005; de Valck et al. 2009; Campbell et al. 2011).

In this study, the discussion frames of social networking as well as drawing inspiration are derived largely from the motives for consuming and participating in UGC. Social networking refers to fulfilling social interaction needs and building communities through blogging (see Shao 2009, 12; Huang et al. 2008, 354; Baumer et al. 2008, 1118). Drawing inspiration is portrayed as its own discussion frame because it is expected that readers draw inspiration from the blogger, sometimes unintentionally, when reading the blog as a leisure time activity. Hence, the idea of entertainment is embedded in drawing inspiration. (see Huang et al. 2008, 353; Baumer et al. 2008, 1113–1115)

Sharing knowledge is used in this study to refer to both posing and answering questions (see Shao 2009, 10; Baumer et al. 2008, 1115; Huang et al. 2008, 353; de Valck et al. 2009, 198; Campbell et al. 2011, 97). Providing peer support has been raised as an individual discussion frame because searching for and providing peer support is expected to be prevalent in mommy blogs (see Morrison 2011, 38; Schau et al. 2009, 43). However, as peer support is based on receiving support from those who are in a similar situation in life, celebrating similarities (see de Valck et al. 2009, 200) is embedded in it. Negotiating norms refers to presenting one's thoughts and opinions and discussing in a constructive manner (see Campbell et al. 2009, 97; de Valck et al. 2009, 198–199). Opposing values, on the other hand, refers to hostile comments and heated discussion in which the thoughts of others are not properly respected (see Campbell et al. 2009, 97; de Valck et al. 2009, 199).

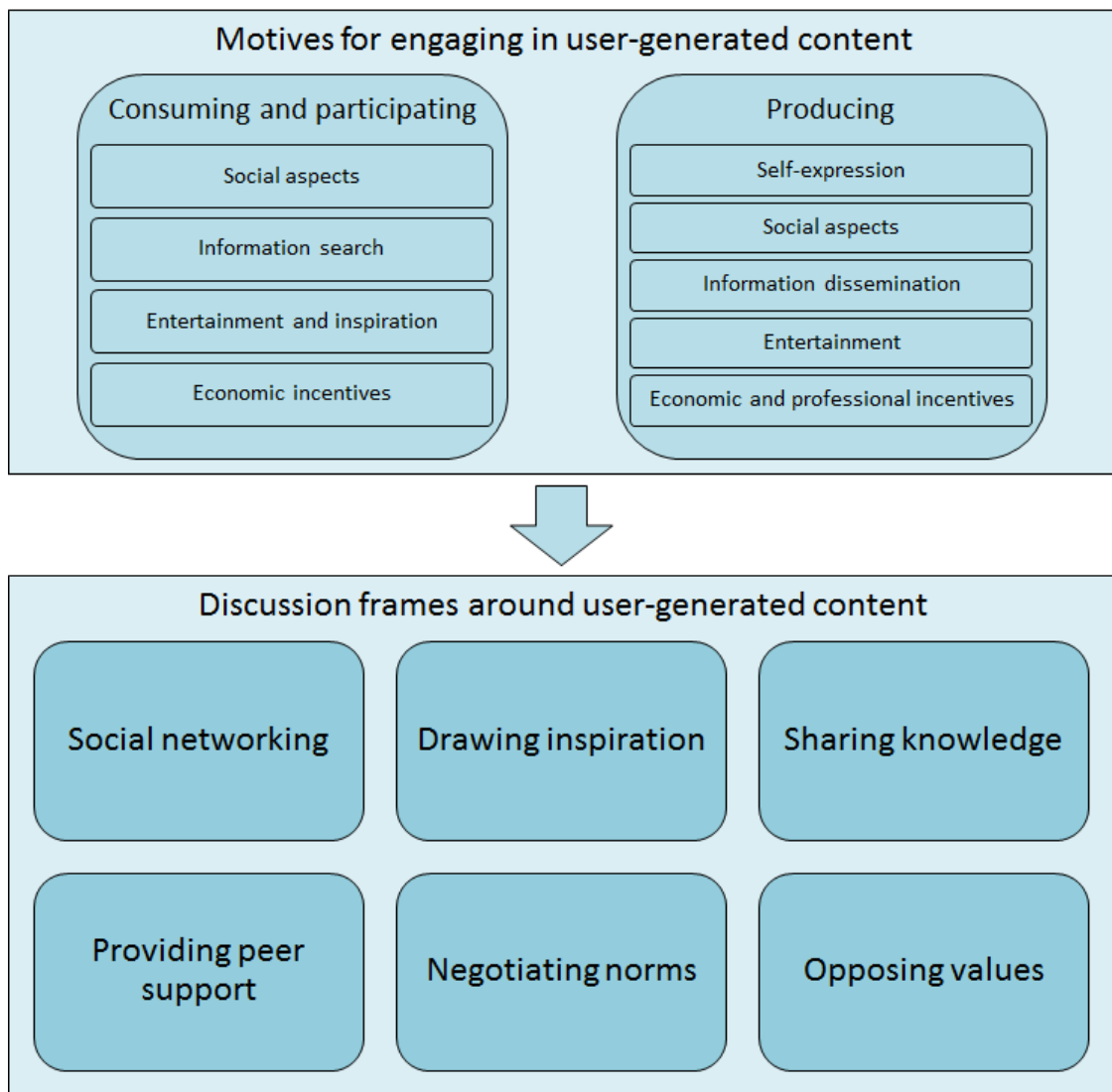


Figure 3 Synthesis of the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework will function as a kind of interpretative framework that does not prevent new themes emerging from the data but only serves as a starting point for analysis. The main emphasis in this study is specifically on the blog's comment area's message content. As Baumer et al. (2008, 1119) point out, different blog groups may differ from each other quite significantly. Previous research was not focused on the blogging context, not to mention on mommy blogs in particular, and therefore the discussion frames are treated as preliminary information. It is noted that the discussion frames can vary to a large extent depending on the context.

3 CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

3.1 Netnography as a research method

Qualitative research can be characterized as being a process, during which the phenomenon under study is gradually conceptualized as the researcher's knowledge on the phenomenon increases (Kiviniemi 2010, 74–76). Qualitative research is concerned with interpretation and is often sensitive to the context, aiming at a holistic understanding on the phenomenon studied. Hence, qualitative research is particularly useful when prior research on the phenomenon is scant. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 5) The data is analyzed and systematically classified into themes that describe the phenomenon comprehensively. Therefore, qualitative research report is always the researcher's personal construction on the phenomenon. (Kiviniemi 2010, 80) Netnography is a qualitative research method designed to explore cultures and communities that emerge through computer-mediated communications (Kozinets 2002, 62). It derives its rich data from naturally occurring, communal, cross-consumer interaction and provides information that has not been elicited by marketers (Kozinets 2002, 70).

The roots of netnography lie in ethnography, an anthropological approach that has been widely used for example in sociology, cultural studies, and marketing and consumer research (Kozinets 2010, 58). As Kozinets (2010, 58–59) defines, the term ethnography “refers both to the act of doing ethnographic fieldwork and to the representations based on such a study”. Ethnography is based on long-term observation as well as participating in the activities of a particular social group. The role of the researcher is crucial as the research is explicitly affected by the researcher's interests and skills to interpret the data. (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994, 485; Kozinets 2002, 62) The data is generated from multiple sources using multiple methods in order to generate varying perspectives on the studied phenomenon (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994, 485). All this makes the method of ethnography flexible and adaptable to a variety of circumstances (Kozinets 2002, 62).

The need for a specially adapted online research technique was generated during the past several years, as a result from the ever growing number of consumers who actively engage in online communities (Erisson & Kovalainen 2008, 96; Kozinets 2002, 61–62). In addition to building communities, consumers share ideas on products and brands on the Internet as fellow consumers are perceived to be more objective information sources. Hence, the online environment offers opportunities for marketing researchers to study the tastes, desires, and needs of consumers. (Kozinets 2002, 61–62) Similarly to ethnography, netnography is based on participant observation, using information that is publicly available on the Internet as a source of its data (Kozinets 2010, 130). Suitable arenas for netnographic research are for example forums, chat and newsgroups, blogs, social networking sites, and mobile communities. Netnography is not limited to the study of text but, instead, can easily be used to study audiovisual, photographic, and podcasting communities as well. (Kozinets 2010, 3; Rokka 2010, 385)

Netnography is concerned with interpretation, understanding, and representation of a cultural or communal phenomenon rather than explanation, testing hypotheses, or statistical analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 5; Gummesson 2005, 312; Kozinets 2010, 60). It provides information on the symbolism, needs, desires, meanings, and consumption patterns of consumers and, in addition, enables the researcher to study the cultural realities of online groups: their language, history, members, practices and rituals, enculturation, education, and possibly growing away from the group (Kozinets 2002, 62; Kozinets 2006a, 281–282). The numerous netnographic studies published during the past few years (see e.g. Muñiz & Schau 2007; Schau et al. 2009; de Valck et al. 2009; Rokka & Moisander 2009; Kozinets et al. 2010) have expanded the understanding of consumption and specific online consumer cultures (Kozinets 2006a, 281).

As a research method, netnography is not as time consuming, elaborate, or expensive as traditional ethnography (Kozinets 2002, 62; Rokka 2010, 385). There is usually plenty of data readily available already in written form. In addition to the data retrieved from the Internet, researchers' own field notes inscribing their observations are important. Contrary to ethnography, netnography can be conducted in an entirely unobtrusive manner without revealing the presence of the researcher to the studied group. (Kozinets 2002, 62–63) These covert studies that provide authentic information are especially useful in studying sensitive research topics (Langer & Beckman 2005, 200). Compared

to focus groups and personal interviews, netnography is again more unobtrusive and realistic because the context of the study has not been fabricated by the researcher. Netnography allows continuing access to the research subjects and their naturally occurring behavior in a particular online social situation. (Kozinets 2002, 62–63)

However, adapting ethnographic, face-to-face research techniques to the online environment is not entirely straightforward. One must bear in mind the four critical differences between face-to-face and computer-mediated social interactions. Firstly, the nature of the interaction is altered as communication online is more artificial. Users have the possibility to strategically control the information they share and the way they present themselves to others. Next, accessibility to online forums is often unrestricted and, moreover, users can participate in online interactions anonymously. Finally, conversations and data in the online environment are also automatically archived for future reference. (Kozinets 2010, 68–72)

There are also certain challenges related to netnography. One of the most obvious ones is the information overload on the Internet. Not all data online can be considered as information and, consequently, it is the researcher's responsibility to identify meaningful information based on the research purpose and questions. Furthermore, much relies on the researcher's ability to provide a systematic and delicate contextualization of information and skill to interpret the same. (Kozinets 2006a, 282) Netnography is also limited by the largely textual nature of communication (Rokka 2010, 385). Even though emoticons can be used in the text, the richness of in-person communication, such as tonal shifts, pauses, cracked voices, and body language, is absent from online environment. Anonymity can be advantageous for example when sensitive topics are concerned but at the same time it prevents the researcher from drawing generalizable conclusions as there is hardly any demographic information on the users available. (Kozinets 2006a, 282)

Being so closely related to each other, it is also possible to blend netnography and ethnography, i.e. generate data from both online and face-to-face cultural interactions (Kozinets 2010, 65; Muñiz & Schau 2007, 37). The decision on whether to use pure netnography or to blend netnography with ethnography depends on the community or phenomena under study. Kozinets (2010, 63–64) separates research on “online

communities” from research on “communities online”. The first refers to studying a phenomenon directly related to online communities and online culture itself or to one of their elements whereas the latter refers to examining general social phenomena that exists both online and offline. When studying online communities, conducting a pure netnography is justifiable. (Kozinets 2010, 65) As the focus of this study is blogs and social interaction in them, pure netnography was chosen as a research method.

3.2 Flow of the netnographic research process

Kozinets (2010, 61) has represented the stages of a netnographic study in a slightly simplified manner. Figure 4 illustrates the progress of netnographic research in the context of this study.

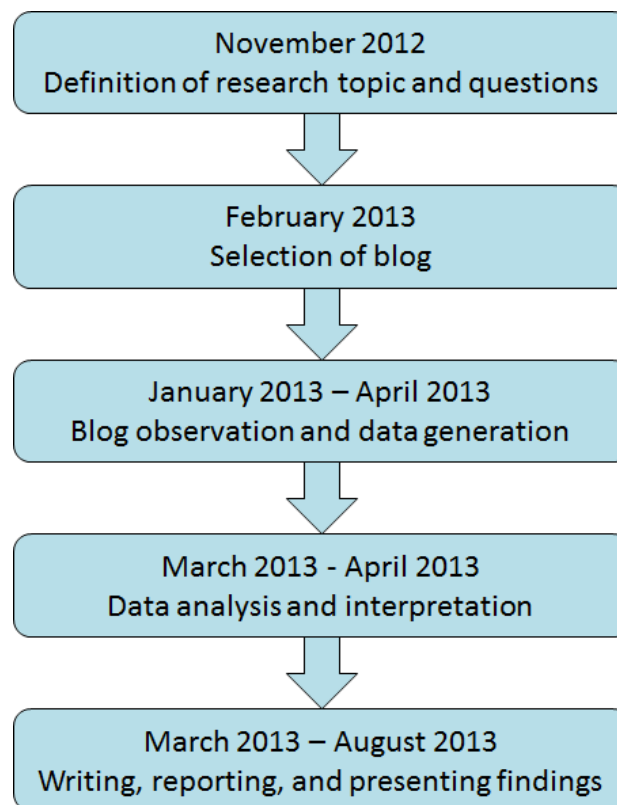


Figure 4 The netnographic research process

Reference: Adapted from Kozinets, R. V. 2010, 61. Netnography. Doing ethnographic research online. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

The research process starts with defining the research topic and questions. After investigating different online sites, the researcher selects a suitable community for the

study and begins the observation and data generation by engaging and immersing in its activities. Even though data analysis and interpretation is classified as a separate stage, it often takes place simultaneously with data generation. Finally, the researcher writes the research report and presents his or her findings. The different stages and their realization in this study, excluding the first one, are discussed in more detail in the following sub-chapters.

3.2.1 Selection of blog

Critical evaluation of the information sources is equally important in both online and offline environment (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 99). As qualitative research aims at describing a certain phenomenon, randomly choosing the information sources is not reasonable. On the contrary, online communities should be carefully evaluated and the ones that best suit the research purpose chosen for observation. (Kozinets 2010, 89; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85–86) In this study, blogs are regarded as cultural texts. The question of whether the information they present is truthful or not is therefore not the main issue (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 103) and the evaluation should be made by using other criteria. Kozinets (2010, 89) has suggested six criteria for evaluating online communities and sites as potential research objects. The sites that are chosen under investigation should be:

1. relevant; to the research purpose and questions
2. active; the site has recent and regular communications
3. interactive; there is communication between participants
4. substantial; there are many participants communicating
5. heterogeneous; there are different participants
6. data-rich; the data is detailed or descriptively rich

Kozinets (2010, 89) notes that it is rarely possible to meet every criterion, but instead, the researcher needs to trade off one or more of these criteria. For example, smaller communities may be less substantial and heterogeneous than larger communities but at the same time more communal, containing rich and purposeful data for the study. (Kozinets 2010, 89) Morrison (2010) classifies mommy blogs into eight categories based on their accessibility and usage dimensions. The most private blogs are protected

with passwords and set up mainly to share information and photos with family. The most public blogs, on the other hand, are commercial magazine-style websites operated as revenue-generating ventures. Blogs in the middle of the spectrum are publicly accessible but they have still maintained the idea of reciprocal reading and commenting that is essential for the insite interactivity of blogs. The blogs that fall into the middle of the spectrum were considered to be the most suitable for the purposes of this study.

The observation of four potential motherhood blogs began in January 2013. Blogs were evaluated on the basis of Kozinet's criterion and at the end of February 2013 a blog called Lähiömutsi, which could be translated as "Suburban Mum", was chosen for more detailed study. "Mutsi" is a Finnish word used for mother especially in the metropolitan area but it has gained popularity among young mothers across Finland as its tone is somewhat more casual and hip. The blogger is a 30-year-old former party girl, a present-day mum, who overtly expresses her values, for example ecological consumption and vegetarianism, to her readers and has broached quite a few taboos during her blogging career. The blogger refers to her common-law husband as Lähiöjeppe, which could be translated as "Suburban Chap" and to her 15-month-old daughter as Minime. According to Google Analytics, the blog has over 10 000 individual readers during one month (Lähiömutsi). Table 3 presents an overview of how the blog meets Kozinets' evaluation criterion and appendix 1 illustrates its comment area.

Table 3 Evaluation of the selected blog

Criterion	Lähiömutsi
Relevant	All entries receive comments. Some entries provoke more comments than others.
Active	14,5 entries per month. About 40 % of the entries receive 11–20 comments. Most commented entry received 195 comments.
Interactive	The blogger tries to answer to all the comments. Reader to reader interaction in the comment area.
Substantial	10 000 readers during one month. Impossible to determine the number of those who comment.
Heterogeneous	Some readers have a child/children, some do not. Some share the blogger's values, some do not.
Data-rich	Long comments that contain significant information: thoughts, opinions, experiences, peer support, etc.

The selected blog is relevant to the research purpose and questions as all entries have received comments. As one of the objectives of this study is to examine what kinds of entries receive the largest number of comments, it is of the essence that some entries provoke more comments than the others. The average number of entries, calculated from the entries written in December 2012 and in January, February and March 2013, is 14,5, meaning that the blog is updated roughly every other day. The number of comments on the entries varies quite a lot but about 40 per cent of the entries had received 11–20 comments and the most commented entry 195 comments. Both the updating frequency and the number of comments each entry receives confirm the fact that the blog and its readers are active enough for the purposes of this study. The criterion of interactivity is met because the blogger tries to answer to every comment she receives. In addition to this, initial observation revealed that there is reader-to-reader interaction, illustrated in appendix 2, in the blog at least to some extent.

The substantiality of the blog community is impossible to determine. The blog has about 15 000 individual readers each month but the number of those who participate in the interaction is impossible to determine as readers can comment the entries without signing in and creating an account. However, during the initial observation it became evident that the readers of the blog are surprisingly heterogeneous. Most of the readers naturally praise the opinions of the blogger as people tend to read blogs they can identify themselves with, but some readers express that they read the blog even though they value completely different things than what the blogger does and make different decisions. Some readers are going through the same phase of life as the blogger while others already have more children. Childless readers also express their presence.

In this study, one of the most important criteria was the quality of the data. During the initial observation, it was acknowledged that the data in Lähiömutsi was rich since the comments were more significant than superficial. Receiving hundreds of superficial comments, merely courtesies and praises for example, is a problem that the most popular blogs might have. Baumer et al. (2008, 1116) found that while readers might feel fine only lurking on popular blogs, they actually feel more obligated to participate in the blog that they feel close to. In the initial observation it became evident that the readers shared their thoughts, opinions, and experiences, gave each other peer support etc., thus making the data rich. A long and data-rich comment is illustrated in appendix

The data of an observational netnography consists of archival data, i.e. data copied from the blogs, and fieldnote data (Kozinets 2010, 98). Blog observation began in January 2013 and continued until April 2013. During the observation, blog entries from the beginning of December 2012 to the end of March 2013 were retrieved from the blog's archives along with the comments they had received. Only the entries that dealt with motherhood and children were collected for a further analysis. Retrieving old entries continued until no more new themes emerged from the data. As the data started to repeat itself, it became evident that the saturation point had been reached (Kozinets 2010, 116; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 87). The data in this study was collected to Microsoft Word using font Times New Roman, font size 12 and line spacing 1. Total collected data amounted to 211 pages. Archival data consisted of 54 blog entries and 1377 comments. Fieldnote data consisted of the researcher's own reflective observations and descriptions of photos that were embedded in blog entries. Fieldnotes were written to the same Word sheets with the entries and comments.

3.2.3 Data analysis and interpretation

In a qualitative study, data analysis and interpretation is just as important a stage as data generation, even though the latter is often described in more detail in research reports. Data analysis and interpretation typically take place simultaneously with data generation (Gummesson 2005, 311–312) as the researcher aims at understanding the communal and cultural contexts of the studied online community throughout the process of data generation (Kozinets 2010, 95–96). In fact, it is evident that analysis and interpretation run through the entire research process (Moisander & Valtonen 2006, 102).

Netnography is not tied to any particular method of data analysis. Instead, netnography encompasses multiple methods and analytic techniques that should be chosen based on the research questions. (Kozinets 2006b, 132) Both data analysis and interpretation can be conducted in a number of different ways. Data analysis and interpretation is often described as an iterative process that involves rejecting and refining the possible interpretations and arouses new questions. New data is collected until emerging interpretations are finally confirmed. (Muñiz & Schau 2007, 38; Ödman 2007, 119)

In general, analyzing means methodically examining the object: the object of the analysis is separated into parts whose interrelations are then studied (Moisander & Valtonen 2006, 101). Hence, the analysis is associated with techniques and research design (Gummesson 2005, 311) through which the researcher is able to develop an interpretation of the phenomenon (Moisander & Valtonen 2006, 101–102). The process of interpretation is not as explicit and transparent as the analysis. Rather, interpretation is highly dependent on the researcher as instrument because for example intuition, common sense, experience, and tacit knowledge are used when striving to arrive at an interpretation about the phenomenon. (Gummesson 2005, 313–314)

In this study, the data was analyzed by using categorization. Categorization, identifying passages of text as belonging to or representing a more general phenomenon (Spiggle 1994, 493), took place when reading the comments for the first time. Initial categories and observations about the contents of the comments were recorded in the margins as fieldnotes. Spiggle (1994, 493) states that while a single comment may exemplify multiple categories and thus have multiple labels, some parts of the comments contained no meaningful information and remained uncategorized. Spiggle's statement held up in this study also as long comments in particular contained multiple categories and some parts of comments were not categorized.

The researcher's pre-understandings both on the subject and on the disciplinary knowledge are the starting points for interpretation. Pre-understanding is always subjective as it is based on traditions that shape the way one understands the world. (Moisander & Valtonen 2006, 109; Ödman 2007, 118) Moisander and Valtonen (2006, 103) also suggest that interpretations never emerge purely from the data but rather through an interpretative framework. After the first reading and categorization, the comments were read for the second time keeping in mind the motives for consuming, participating in and producing UGC as well as the themes that emerged from exploring the social interaction around UGC. These themes functioned as the interpretative framework of this study. Dubois and Gadde (2002, 556) emphasize that while most data collecting activities are directed towards searching the data that supports the theoretical framework, researchers should concentrate more on discovering new and perhaps surprising ideas from the collected data. In this study, the interpretative framework did not restrict the analysis as new and differing themes emerged from the data as well.

3.2.4 Writing, reporting, and presenting findings

The question of language was taken into careful consideration in this study. The blogs that were observed in this study are written in Finnish, the mother tongue of the researcher. As the thesis was chosen to be written in English, the quotations used in the study had to be translated. Blog entries and comments are written in idiomatic and slangy Finnish and in order to convey the tone and the more discreet nuances of the texts, careful translation was conducted. Capital letters and lower-case letters were not altered.

In the quotations, the blogger is referred to as Lähimutsi, since this is the name she is referred to in the blog as well. The readers are referred to with their own pseudonyms. Some anonym participants express their pseudonyms only at the end of their comments. In those cases, the expressed pseudonyms were used instead of naming the participant merely anonym. The researcher's insertions, the purpose of which is to clarify the comments and provide additional information gained during the research process, are presented in the footnotes at the bottom of the page.

3.3 Evaluation of the study

Qualitative research in general suffers from the lack of unambiguous evaluative standards. The evaluative standards for qualitative research have often been criticized of being vague and unclear compared to those of quantitative research. Moreover, many scholars have suggested that the Internet research requires its own particular set of ethical rules. (Kozinets 2010, 157–158) Research ethics is an important issue in conducting a research as it runs through all research activities. Therefore critical thinking, self-evaluation, and self-reflection should be considered throughout the entire research process. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 62; Moisander & Valtonen 2006, 21)

Netnography's unique feature of unobtrusiveness has caused much discussion on how to determine its ethical guidelines. The ethical concerns of netnography are based on two fundamental issues: are online forums public or private sites and what constitutes informed consent in the online environment. (Kozinets 2002, 65) Langer and Beckman

(2005, 194) proposed that if access to an online forum is restricted, it should be treated as a private site and a permission to use the texts in a study should be obtained. If access is not restricted, the site can be defined as public communication and, as a consequence, it can be stated that informed consent has already been obtained. The latter is the case in this study; all Internet users are able to read and post comments without registering and signing in and therefore all content can be treated as public. Hence, there was no need to ask for a separate permission for collecting, analyzing and citing the comments.

Kozinets (2010, 151) states that the researcher should always disclose their presence and intentions when conducting a participant-observational netnography. However, this study was a purely observational netnography and was partly based on archival research and downloading of existing posts. The readers were not directed or deceived by the researcher in any way since there was no interaction between the researcher and the community. Hence, there was no need to apprise the blogger nor the blog readers of the presence of the researcher. Moreover, consciousness of the presence of the researcher could have skewed the social interaction in the blog.

Kozinets (2010, 157) recommends the use of ten evaluation criteria for assessing the quality of a netnographic study: coherence, rigour, literacy, groundedness, innovation, resonance, verisimilitude, reflexivity, praxis and intermix. The criterion and the actions that were taken to ensure the quality of this study are presented in table 4.

Table 4 Ensuring the quality of the study

Criterion	Actions taken
Coherence	Observing one blog and its readers.
Rigour	Carefully studying the method of netnography.
Literacy	Reviewing past literature on UGC and blogs.
Groundedness	Citations derived from the data supporting theoretical implications.
Innovation	Focus on blogs, especially their readers.
Resonance	Considering the tone of the comments during interpretation and writing.
Verisimilitude	Representing mommy blogs truthfully by using citations.
Reflexivity	Acknowledging the researcher's subjective interpretation.
Praxis	Aiming to inspire research on blogs and social interaction online.
Intermix	Noticing the connection between online and offline social interaction.

The first criterion, coherence, means that each interpretation should be free from internal contradictions and that observations should present a unified pattern with other collected netnographic data (Kozinets 2010, 136). In this study, the collected data forms a coherent whole, as only one blog and its readers were observed. Observing one blog enabled a deeper absorption in the data. The next criterion, rigour, implies that the researcher has to understand the methodological standards of netnographic research and what is required in each stage in order to conduct a netnography (Kozinets 2010, 164). Hence, the method of netnography and the different guidelines of each stage were carefully studied before starting to conduct the study.

Additionally, the criterion of literacy emphasizes that knowledge on the past literature and research approaches that are relevant to the study increase its credibility (Kozinets 2010, 165). The past literature on UGC and blogs were reviewed at the beginning of the research process. Blogs are a relatively new subject of research and it was somewhat difficult to find information directly related to them. Therefore, it was decided to deal with UGC and virtual communities in general in the theory. Groundedness is the extent to which the theoretical representation is supported by data, and the links between the data and theory are clear and convincing, i.e. the researcher has made contact with the studied group and gained deep understanding on the members and their behavior (Kozinets 2010, 166). Therefore, all theoretical implications in this study are supported by citations derived from the data enabling the readers to see the links between the data and theory.

Innovation means that a netnographic study should seek to extend current knowledge by providing new and creative ways of understanding systems, structures, experience, or actions (Kozinets 2010, 166). As mentioned before, blogs are a relatively new arena for research and therefore studies similar to this one have not been conducted. Given the limited resources, this study contains a certain degree of newness as readers especially have remained unexplored. Resonance is about conveying a personalized and sensitizing connection with the online community under study instead of portraying the members as lifeless stereotypes. This can be achieved by taking emotions into account in the researcher's fieldnotes and maintaining the same emotional pitch in the narrative. (Kozinets 2010, 167) Above all, ensuring resonance was present in the interpretation

process. The tone of the comments was also taken into account during the writing process.

Verisimilitude is perhaps the most important criterion as regards the quality of the text. It refers to the text's ability to convey believable and lifelike sense of cultural and communal contact to the readers. (Kozinets 2010, 168) This study aims at representing mommy blogs and the social interaction in them as truthfully as possible. This is done by presenting citations that have been carefully translated. The criterion of reflexivity acknowledges that as observers, and sometimes participants, netnographers play an important role in the research process because researchers' own reflective fieldnotes are an essential part of the analyzed data. Netnographic text should therefore stay open to alternative interpretations by conveying the possible conflicts and differences that emerge during analysis. (Kozinets 2010, 169–170) It is acknowledged that the interpretations in this study are the researcher's subjective interpretations. Other researchers might interpret the data differently. The researcher's relationship with the blog context was also taken into consideration when defining what blog context would be chosen for the study. The fundamental characteristics of blogs and the activity around them are familiar to the researcher but the context of motherhood is not. The fact that the researcher can observe motherhood blogs from an objective point of view without presuppositions was considered to be advantageous for the study.

Praxis, "practical action aimed at social betterment" as Kozinets (2010, 171) defines it, refers to the idea that a netnographic text should inspire and empower social action. This study shows the growing importance of blogs and highlights the opportunities they offer for studying naturally occurring interaction in the online environment. Finally, intermix reminds that both online and offline social interaction are present in the community members' daily lives. Hence, this interconnection should be taken into consideration in the text if it is relevant to the research topic. (Kozinets 2010, 171) This study aimed at describing and analyzing social interaction specifically in the online environment and therefore offline social interaction was not taken into account. However, it was noted that connections to offline social life are indeed present in the online environment.

4 THE INTERACTIVE NATURE OF MOTHERHOOD BLOGS

4.1 Discussion frames in motherhood blogs

During the data analysis and interpretation, eight common discussion frames, namely introducing and welcoming, exchanging courtesies, drawing inspiration, searching for information, sharing knowledge, providing peer support, expressing opinions, and opposing values, were identified. It is notable that the discussion frames are not mutually exclusive but, instead, it is extremely common that two or more themes exist in one single comment.

4.1.1 Introducing and welcoming

Salutations, social actions that occur in blogs' comment areas, are something that set blogs apart from personal diaries to which they have been compared to. Salutations are something that simply cannot occur in diaries. (Nardi et al. 2004, 223) Schau et al. (2009, 43) identified welcoming, greeting new members and assisting them in brand learning and socialization, as one practice in virtual brand communities. In brand communities, the member's posting history, i.e. how many comments the member has posted to the community, is often visible to other members and it is therefore rather easy to spot new participants and welcome them to the community. In the blogging context this kind of history information is not visible. What is typical in blogs, however, is that some participants choose to introduce themselves. Introducing occurs generally at the beginning of a comment and is always accompanied by another theme. New participants are especially active in introducing themselves to the blogger, sometimes even informing how they have found the blog:

"I just found your blog and it is so great to read these entries of yours from Thailand – I'm going to the same destination in February with 5-year-old and 6-month-old travelers!"

-Rouva K, 22.1.2013

“... I found your blog via Minttu’s² fb-linking”
 -MaijaM, 15.1.2013

Old and regular readers also identify themselves to the blogger. Motivation for emphasizing the long continued relationship with the blog might be that of credibility and adding value to the comment. By stating regular readership these participants differentiate themselves from the new readers who do not have as strong relationship with and as extensive knowledge on the blog as the regular readers have.

“I have to say straight away that I’m an active reader of your blog :) Thanks for this :)”
 -Johanna, 20.2.2013

Unlike in virtual brand communities (Schau et al. 2009, 43), other readers were not discovered to engage in welcoming. In the blogging context, welcoming is carried out by the blogger after participants have introduced themselves:

“Nice that you’ve found your way to the suburb³!”
 -Lähiömutsi, 24.1.2013

“Nice to hear that you keep visiting us here in the suburb!”
 -Lähiömutsi, 23.2.2013

When studying heterogeneity in a running community, Thomas et al. (2013, 1017) discovered that community members have dramatically different motivations for joining and staying in the community. Heterogeneity was also uncovered among the readers of Lähiömutsi. Perhaps surprisingly, the blog has quite a few of readers who do not have children of their own yet but who still read and comment on the blog. Some childless readers are connected to children through their work but, as Anonym expresses, the style of writing and the lifestyle of the blogger can be enough to hook childless readers to continue reading the blog:

“Oh gee, what a great text. I’m not a mother so I don’t know anything about that job yet, but I can imagine how quick people are to judge others in that area.”
 -Ninni, 10.1.2013

² Minttu is another mommy blogger.

³ Suburb refers to the blog as a whole.

“Your blog is lovely and I read it regularly even though I probably never want to have a child. There is just something about you and the way you write and the way you do things that is really gripping :)”

-Anonym, 10.1.2013

Thomas et al. (2013, 1017) discovered that as heterogeneity assists the continuity of the community, it can also cause tension inside the community. The fact that the blog has so many childless readers invokes joy and surprise in the blogger. She is surprised by the fact that people who are in a totally different situation in life find her blog interesting:

“I should conduct some kind of a research on how many readers Lähiömutsi has outside mommyland. There are quite a few of you, and that is fascinating indeed. How lovely, that you feel at home in my blog!”

-Lähiömutsi, 13.1.2013

“Thanks for a nice comment! It always makes me smile when someone says they are reading Lähiömutsi, even though they never want to have a child!”

-Lähiömutsi, 11.1.2013

Still another group that presents themselves in the comment area is other mommy bloggers. Budding mommy bloggers typically add the Internet address of their blog in the comment, thus advertising it for other readers at the same time:

“I found your blog a while ago – I’ve also started to write my own blog a couple of months ago, <http://tammilinnan.blogspot.fi/> and I also follow others’ writings actively :)”

-Nelli, 14.1.2013

4.1.2 Exchanging courtesies

Compliments and praises directed to the blogger are extremely common in the comment area. These courtesies are typically short comments but often parts of longer comments, thus occurring with other themes. These comments are more superficial in nature and they might stem from the fact that blogs are often read as entertainment (see Huang et al. 2008, 353; Shao 2009, 11; Baumer 2008, 1113–1116). Readers compliment both the blogger’s and her daughter’s appearance, also paying attention to their resemblance:

“Hugs and kisses to Minime (gosh how cute kid!)!”

-yhden äiti, 11.12.2012

”You look really exotic in a way, I could almost think that you are (at least half) local if you happened to walk by in Thailand :D Beautiful women in your family!”

-Anonym, 25.1.2013

“You two look alike indeed!”

-Paloma, 17.2.2013

Especially the entry that dealt with the issue of gaining weight during and after pregnancy generated a multitude of positive comments on Lähiömutsi’s looks. Even though she did not feel comfortable in her own skin, her readers saw her through a different lens and cheered her up in the comments:

”Oh pooh, I’ve always thought that you look like princess Victoria when I read your blog.. Not chubby at all, for god’s sake!”

-Cinnamonroll girl, 26.3.2013

It was observed that readers pay a great deal of attention to the pictures that accompany blog entries. The pictures often relate tightly to the topic of the entry but they can also be random illustrations, the intention of which is merely to give life to the entry. Readers often compliment products that they see in the pictures, but also non-commercial or intangible objects, such as food and the atmosphere the pictures convey. Comments that compliment products are often tied together with information search, a discussion frame that will be presented later. It is common that the objects of the compliments are not mentioned in the text at all, but only appear in the pictures:

“oh god, I couldn’t finish reading the entry ‘cause I had to come and yell that the dress in the first picture is magnificent!!! from there? LOVELY LOVELY LOVELY!!!!”

-Oi mutsi mutsi, 1.2.2013

“Your wompat sling is super cool. you have a great time there in the warmth!”

-Alanis, 19.1.2013

“Lovely things. And damn, your food looks always so delicious. I became so hungry and I must get strawberries”

-Anna, 27.2.2013

“Oh, such atmospheric pictures! Looks like you have a really lovely home!”

-Olga, 10.2.2013

The blogger's writing style as well as the topics that she writes about receive positive comments from the readers. All these things are related to the overall experience of reading the blog. Vivid language, high-quality photographs and thought evoking entries amongst more amusing entries evidence that the blogger is devoted to the blog and makes the blog interesting in the eyes of readers:

"Thank you for a fabulous blog!! I've ploughed through the entire blog in two weeks and you have a great straight writing style! This definitely became my favorite blog!"

-Anonym, 10.2.2013

"Hi! I've read several mommy/pregnancy/baby blogs and yours is definitely one of my favorites. You write well, lucidly and interestingly about different things :) Thanks and write in future as well! :)"

-jenni, 26.12.2012

Readers are extremely glad that the blogger dares to write about difficult topics as well. For example, the entry that discussed why some mothers feel guilty about the choices they have made related to motherhood and feel inferior to other mothers generated multiple comments praising the blogger for her courage:

"So great that someone opened their mouth on the subject."

-Jonna, 18.2.2013

The comment feature is essential for the interactive nature of blogs (see e.g. Herring et al. 2005, 162; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 103; Nardi 2004, 224), but equally important is the fact that the blogger participates in the interaction that takes place in the comment area. The fact that Lähiömutsi tries to answer to every comment she receives is appreciated among the readers:

"You truly are super because you reply to all the numerous comments!"

-Pingale, 26.2.2013

General greetings that readers send to the blogger are evidence of the personal relationship readers feel they have with the blogger. These greetings are similar to those that readers express to their offline friends. As Baumer et al. (2008, 1116) noted some readers perceive blogs as one-to-one communication between them and the blogger.

"Belated congratulations to the 1-year-old!"

-Sari, 12.2.2013

“Wonderful Christmas time to you!”
-Paula, 24.12.2012

4.1.3 Drawing inspiration

It was clearly evident that readers draw inspiration from the blog entries (see e.g. Baumer et al. 2008, 1113). Courtesies often accompany comments where readers admit drawing inspiration. In addition, searching for information, which will be discussed later, is also related to drawing inspiration. Pictures play an important role when drawing inspiration; often readers spot interesting products in the pictures even though they are not mentioned in the text. Readers also acknowledge themselves that the blog can make them crave for products they did not know they needed:

”Hey I have to ask about those ball lamps that are hanging in your wall. ‘Cause I’ve seen them elsewhere too and now they were on sale in some stall in your Bangkok pictures. These pictures were taken before Thailand so can you get those from somewhere else or were those bought on a previous trip? For some reason I started to crave for those real bad now! :D”
-Anonym, 10.2.2013

”That black quilted-peak-bonnet in the first picture! Pure love! That for T⁴! I waaaaaaant!”
-Jatta, 12.12.2012

”Oh pooh, I probably shouldn’t have read this yet :) That kind of swimming ring for us too! Would be great to our baby swimmer who isn’t afraid of water either”
-Rouva K, 30.1.2013

It is not only the products that inspire readers. The readers draw inspiration from the blogger’s everyday life that reflects her values and attitude to life in general. The blogger is a vegetarian and she strives for making ecological choices in her everyday life. After an entry in which she discussed about preparing purées for her daughter instead of feeding her canned food that is full of additives, one reader expressed:

”Anyways, at least now you inspired me to make a purée for Pampula⁵ out of the parsnips that have waited in the fridge for a long time. I need to take a look at the book and see what you can actually make from those.”
-Periaatteen Nainen, 10.1.2013

⁴ T refers to the reader’s child.

⁵ Pampula means Bobble and is a nickname the reader has given to her child.

In the material world of today, the idea to ask for a second-hand book, preferably the one that has been the favorite of the presents giver, as a birthday present to the blogger's daughter, invoked delight in the readers. In addition, the daughter's birthday brunch, with its atmosphere and menu, gave readers inspiration:

"What a lovely idea! I might have to borrow it."
-Jenni, 11.2.2013

"This entry gave me a lot of inspiration for our little one's upcoming christening, thanks! :-)"
-Olga, 10.2.2013

One of the most inspiring things during the blog observation period turned out to be the family's backpacking trip to Thailand. The family was brave enough to head to Southeast Asia for one month with their one-year-old daughter. This inspired readers to think outside conventional social patterns and to realize that many things can be done after having children as well.

"I just found your blog, thanks for sharing your everyday life and hints! Especially the whole family's backpacking trip to far-off land is inspiring!"
-Riikka, 27.2.2013

In general, the fact that the blogger expresses her thoughts and opinions on matters concerning motherhood and bringing up a child is considered to be inspiring in a way. There are multiple issues in motherhood that invoke strong feelings and split the opinions. However, some readers find it extremely inspiring to learn about different choices. Even though the readers have their own opinions, differing opinions make them contemplate their own choices critically:

"I read mommy blogs 'cause they provide food for thought."
-sanni, 10.1.2013

"Great text (once again), such a fresh blog and so out of my own world. I live in the periphery and I'm far from eco and organic, but I enjoy it when the choices you make wake me to contemplate my own consumption. The outings that you go on make me think of my "haste" and I believe that it has made me loosen up a bit and to be a bit more present. => so thanks! and I believe my kid says thanks too =)"
-Diidah, 12.1.2013

Extremely thought provoking entries can inspire fellow bloggers to deal with the same subject in their own blogs. For example the entry that dealt with comparing oneself to other mothers and feeling inferior to them spurred fellow bloggers to tackle the same topic in more detail in their own blogs:

”Here’s my ideas on guilt:
<http://www.arkitehti.net/2013/01/23/paskamutsiudesta/>“
 -Arkitehti, 23.1.2013

4.1.4 Searching for information

The idea that mothers read blogs largely to gain information (Ley 2007, 1393; see also e.g. Shao 2009, 10; Baumer et al. 2008, 1115; Huang et al. 2008, 353) was supported in this study as it was observed that readers pose questions on varying topics in the blog’s comment area. When studying virtual communities hosted by apparel retailers, Kim and Jin (2006, 51) discovered that many of the discussion topics were product centered. Blog entries that contain product reviews were observed to be popular among blog readers. As a response to an entry that reviewed the blogger’s high chair, C praised:

”I like! Truly a good and factual entry and you can see that the writer knows what she’s talking about here! :)”
 -C, 28.2.2013

Readers pose defining questions about products that are presented in the blog (see e.g. Campbell et al. 2011, 97) and ask the blogger to compare two or more brands. This supports the notion that peer reviews are extremely influential sources of information when consumers are making purchase decisions (see e.g. Hennig-Thurau and Walsh 2003, 58). Readers’ questions can be extremely detailed and the blogger is often asked to present her personal opinions on the products:

”Does that Wompat differ from Tula⁶ a lot?”
 -Minnuliini, 28.1.2013

”Such a great thing! I’ve been trying to find Höö’s Mika-Miina-pants in bigger sized but I’ve only found sizes that are extremely bigger. – – How do you find the tightness of the rib? Pants are indeed jolly-looking, the pocket detail is similar to pants I bought from Copenhagen that have a really tight waistband but

⁶ Wompat and Tula are baby sling brands.

the ribs in the legs are so loose that the pants go under the feet... Maybe these Jenni JJ pants combine the best from those two pants ;)”
-Onneli, 29.3.2013

Pictures play an important role in information search as well. As noted before, the discussion frame of drawing inspiration is closely related to searching for information. In addition, questions about products are often accompanied with compliments. Readers often pose questions about products that they see in the pictures, even though they are not mentioned in the text. Typically readers want to know where the blogger has bought the products they are interested in:

“Is that blue ”scarf” in your head meant to be a headdress or is it some normal scarf? It looks so lovely and I bet it covers well from the sun.”
-Lottiina, 28.1.2013

“who cares about the bottles even though they’re cute, BUT what on earth is that lovely tray thingie your mini has??? I tried to google it but apparently my search words were weak ‘cause I didn’t find anything similar...”
-Manna, 27.2.2013

“Mini’s tights (?) are super! Where are they from, if you don’t mind me asking?”
-Jenni, 23.2.2013

“Those booties in Minime’s feet caught my eye, where did you get them and do they stay in the feet well? We’ve got the cold floors of an old wooden house and I’ve tried to make all sorts of wool sock/bootie thingies to stay in the baby’s feet. They have to be non-slip, ‘cause the baby gets up and walks with support. Those look superwarm!”
-eepu, 10.12.2012

The fact that readers sometimes pose questions to which the answer can be found in the entry, supports the essential role of pictures in blogs. In the following example, the blogger has already stated in the entry that the handles of the sippy cup have been bought from Thailand. The reader presumably has not read the entry properly but only browsed through it paying more attention to the pictures since she poses the question:

“Where have you bought the handles to lifefactory⁷? I’ve tried to look from everywhere, but I’ve only found handles of MAM-bottles and those are bigger in mouth :/”
-Anonym, 25.2.2013

⁷ Lifefactory is a brand that manufactures for example baby bottles and sippy cups.

In addition to posing questions on merely products and brands, readers pose wider questions related to entries. For example, the readers were extremely interested in the family's backpacking trip to Thailand and enquired about their budget, the places they had stayed in and the food they fed to their daughter, to name but a few:

“Could you tell what kinds of places you have stayed in and with what kind of budget are you traveling with? Here we are jealously looking and reading a lovely decision made with feeling.”

-Anonym, 22.1.2013

“Nice to read about your trip to Thailand and actually my comment and question is related to traveling. Last summer, feeling a bit terrified, we went to Turkey for one week with an 18-month-old and a three-year-old. The trip went well actually and we're now planning on another trip for next summer. We've been thinking that this time we'd stay there for 2 weeks so I'd like to know how your eating went in Thailand? If this time we didn't count so much on eating in restaurants but would cook ourselves so how is it possible in an environment like that? I'm mostly referring to basic foodstuffs... What is safe to be used from a Finnish point of view, what can you get there? Obviously Thailand and Turkey are different but both are exotic compared to Finland and different than traveling to Sweden or Europe.”

-Johanna, 20.2.2013

Some of the readers' questions are extremely personal in nature. This again supports the idea that readers feel very close to the blogger (see e.g. Morrison 2011, 38; Baumer et al. 2008, 1116). In addition, it can be thought that readers perceive the blogger as an opinion leader and seek approval for their own opinions:

“Where would you draw the line that you wouldn't breastfeed a child anymore? I think one year is not bad at all, but for example breastfeeding a pre-schooler is a thing I'd never do...”

-Anonym, 9.1.2013

“How have you vaccinated mini? I'm pondering on the vaccinations that are ahead to my own 2 month-old...”

-Annika, 23.2.2013

Sometimes searching for information goes beyond merely posing questions in the comment area as readers suggest topics for entries. This may be the case when the readers wish to get more extensive reflection to their questions. Additionally, suggested topics might be such that the blogger has not dealt with earlier and therefore, it is not possible to pose defining questions about them:

“Would you like to write about vegetarianism some time?”

-Anonym, 2.2.2013

“As an idea for an entry I weigh in a question about your tv/kids programme watching...”

-Manna, 27.2.2013

“They are lovely indeed and so are those leggings with pink knees! Where can you find those? I’ve also admired Mini’s tights with black and white checks. You should write about Mini’s fashion more! PLEASE!”

-Annikainen, 28.3.2013

4.1.5 Sharing knowledge

The blogger’s role in sharing information in the comment area is evident (see e.g. Stoeckl et al. 2007, 406–407; Nardi 2004, 226). As the blogger reacts to virtually every comment, she also aims at answering to readers’ comments. In answering to queries about where certain products have been bought, the blogger sometimes goes beyond providing a retailer’s name. Here, the blogger, who lives in Helsinki, informs a reader from Tampere where the swimming ring that was presented in the blog entry can be bought, even providing a link:

“Well hey, you can get them from Manse⁸ as well, ’cause Lastentarvikeliike⁹ Baby Style sells them: <http://verkkokauppa.babystyle.fi/products/view/925/rp> In fact, we bought Mini’s ring from the same store, Vaasa outlet, when we happened to be in the neighborhood.”

-Lähiömutsi, 30.1.2013

In addition to searching for information from blogs, readers also share information and opinions to others. Sharing information was not included in the motivations for consuming and participating in UGC but in the context of virtual communities, sharing knowledge was identified as one of the discussion practices (de Valck et al. 2009, 198). In the blogging context, it was observed that readers are keen on answering questions that the blogger poses in entries. Readers were extremely active for example when the blogger enquired tips for traveling with a one-year-old. The longest reply, which covered tips and the reader’s own experiences in great detail, was more than half a sheet in length. Most of the tips were somewhat shorter, such as the following:

⁸ Manse is a nickname for Tampere. It originates from the name of Manchester.

⁹ Lastentarvikeliike means baby gear store.

“If you have an iDevice then I recommend that you download both Kapu-apps! <http://www.kaputoys.com/fi/> At least our baby likes to stare at those and calms down during drive even though she can’t play/use them herself yet.”
-Liisa, 14.1.2013

Readers are also happy to share information even when tips or advice have not been asked for. However, usually the tips relate to the topic of the entry. In the following, Milla shares cleaning tips after an entry in which the blogger revealed washing Duplo blocks in the dishwasher:

“You should be careful with the dishwasher ’cause the worst case scenario is that the duploblocks melt there. Especially if they fall to the bottom. But you can throw duplos to the washing machine inside a pillowcase. The temperature is quite a lot lower, so the blocks are safe there :)”
-Milla, 6.3.2013

Regular readers have become familiar with the blogger’s values and her taste in, for example, clothes and décor. A reader who knows that the blogger prefers buying used products and loves retro fashion and décor hinted:

“I recommend a jumble sale group in FB called Retroi, lumppui ja rättei¹⁰ to you, dunno if that’s correct, but something like that. They’ve got loads of kids’ retro fabrics, toys and e.g. the cashier was once for sale!”
-Anonym, 27.12.2012

It is common for the readers to validate their comments by sharing their own experiences. This became evident for example in the comments to an entry where the blogger described the features of their high chair. The reader agrees with the blogger on the good qualities of the chair but expresses a downside that she has noticed:

“We’ve got the same chair! The black paintwork has suffered from the hits of the sippy cup. Luckily we’ll get a new chair to replace this one. Don’t know if it was a bad batch or a defect in all of them. Otherwise a great chair :)”
-jessie, 28.2.2013

Readers are fast to educate the blogger if they notice that she has been unaware of something. When reviewing the baby bottles of Lifefactory, a well-known and popular brand among mothers, the blogger stated that one of the few downsides of the bottle was the fact that the sippy part did not have a cap even though the nipple part did. The

¹⁰ Retroi, lumppui ja rättei means Retro, rags and cloths.

readers quickly educated the blogger that the same cap can actually be used with both parts. The blogger was astonished that she had not realized it before and was glad that the readers corrected the misunderstanding she had about the caps:

“But, we do have caps in the bottles! They came with the bottle. And I mean just the kind that you put on top of the sippy and with the cap you can carry the bottle in a backpack without a plastic bag.”

-Anonym, 24.2.2013

“And exactly those see through caps that you use on top of the nipple part can be used with the sippy part as well :)”

-Anonym, 25.2.2013

“Yep, I’ve tested it and gosh, there it goes! It only needed a good push that it clicked on its place.”

-Lähiömutsi, 9.3.2013

Readers do not only share information with the intention of helping the blogger, but also to help and educate fellow readers. As Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004, 46) discovered, concern for other consumers is a strong motive for expressing one’s opinion on the Internet. Being highly communal (Morrison 2011, 38), it is natural for readers of mommy blogs to feel desire to help each other. In the comments to the entry on the Lifefactory baby bottles, many readers admired the handles that the blogger had found from Thailand and wondered if similar handles could be found from Finland. Irma tried to help the others by providing a link, even though the handles are not of interest to her:

“Hey, could these handles fit to those bottles of yours?
<http://www.matkamuksu.com/tuotemerkit/organickidz>”

-Irma, 25.2.2013

Lifefactory bottle review spurred readers to contemplate on other baby bottle brands as well even though other brands were not mentioned in the entry. Readers expressed pros of other brands and even compared them to Lifefactory bottles:

“That glass baby bottle looks nice indeed. We’ve used a Tommee tippee for several months already. It has been easy to wash too, thanks to the wide shape of the bottle, and it hardly gathers any stuff inside it. I must take that glass into consideration as well.”

-Gampela 25.2.2013

“We’ve got a couple of Lifefactory bottles, but if you’re frightened about the price I can also recommend Nuki’s glass bottles (they cost way less than ten

euros). The measurement chart in the bottle is much easier and more precise than in LF (the precision of measurements is important e.g. if you use powdered formula milk).”

-Anonym, 28.2.2013

It was noticed that other brands were brought forward when they related to products that had been introduced in the blog entries. Thus, readers offered alternative products to both the blogger and fellow readers. After the blogger had introduced a new Finnish children’s clothing brand Jenni J.J., one reader hinted:

“<http://www.muru.fi/> Do you know these kids’ clothes? They are Finnish organic unisex design too.”

-Anonym, 29.3.2013

4.1.6 Providing peer support

Readers express extremely clearly in the comments that they have received a great deal of peer support, the value of which has been priceless, from reading the blog (see e.g. Ley 2007, 1393; Morrison 2011, 38). The readers describe how reading the blog has made them feel better as they have realized that they are not the only ones with confused feelings and express their gratitude:

“You’ve dealt with so many delicate issues that I’m sure you’ve provided peer support to many addresses.”

-Hippiäinen, 11.1.2013

“Your blog has provided me incredible peer support during this 7,5 month motherhood (especially during the first anxious weeks). The most unforgettable entry is “Kun äitiys ei ole ihanaa”¹¹ It was then at the latest when I realized I wasn’t alone! ;) Heartfelt thanks for that!”

-Suvi, 11.1.2013

“Anyway, my intention was to express a warm thank you. My baby is now one-month-old and the first for me and my husband. Sometimes I’ve been rather deep in feeling a shitty mom and distressed too. I found your blog some weeks ago and it was a relief to read that someone else has had similar feelings and that you can write about them publicly and in a humorous way. Reading your blog truly made me feel better.”

-Pikku, 10.1.2013

¹¹ Kun äitiys ei ole ihanaa means When motherhood is not wonderful.

However, as readers get support from the blogger, they simultaneously provide peer support back to her as they describe their own similar experiences and feelings (see e.g. Morrison 2011, 38). The entry where the blogger confessed that she had in fact gained weight during the first year after giving birth instead of losing it and returning back to her old weight was one of the most commented entries of the observation period. As readers tell about their similar, and even sensitive, experiences, they also give more and more peer support to other readers as well:

“Exactly the same things here! My grandma was stroking my belly blissfully ‘cause she thought I was expecting a third one. My dad asked if a third one was already on its way. The view in the mirror is otherwise ok but my belly is terrible. No wonder people think I’m pregnant ‘cause I sure do look like I am!”
-Miiwu 24.3.2013

“Oh dear, I’m glad I’m not alone. Exactly the same thing happened to me: the hunger when I was breastfeeding was incomprehensible. I was already hungry again when I finished a nosh-up. And obviously it meant that I constantly nibbled at chocolate between meals. It was so depressing to notice that four months after giving birth I had gained 4 more kilos even though I had thought I’d lose that amount of weight spontaneously. And when you’ve heard the “breastfeeding is the best way to lose weight” –comments you feel so deceived. Why isn’t my body reacting like others’? That’s why it’s unbelievably important to hear that I’m not the only one.”
-Ruusu, 24.3.2013

In addition to providing peer support to readers who already have children and who are going through the same things that the blogger is, the blog offers support and encouragement to readers who are considering the best time for starting a family and only planning on having children. Starting a family can be scary but the blog has evidently demonstrated that all kinds of things can be done with the baby:

“We’ve only been dreaming and talking about a baby and one thing that we’ve been thinking (used to a selfish life) is how much a baby will change our lives. And sure it will change things (even turn them upside down) but your blog has made me see that it’s not the end of the world; you can still see friends at caf  s, go to festivals and most importantly travel!! I’ve loved reading about your successful trip to Thailand – maybe one day we’ll spend the paternity month somewhere far away :) I’m excited to start following your blog! P.s. This blog has enlightened me to carrying and one of the first things I’m gonna buy when a baby comes is definitely a baby sling!! :)”
-Anonym, 10.2.2013

In the context of online pregnancy and mothering community Ley (2007, 1394) discovered that members' commitment to the community becomes evident in comments where they express their hope that the community will be around for years to come. Nardi et al. (2004, 224) also noted that the audience often urges the blogger to continue blogging through low-energy periods. In Lähimutsi, readers express compassion and encourage the blogger to continue blogging even though she sometimes has to put up with sniping.

“Keep up the good work. I read your blog just because I want to know how everyday life goes in other baby families.”

-Anonym, 10.1.2013

“Don't let the sniping of those small-minded jerks get you down! They can change the blog if they don't like this one :)”

-Hippiäinen, 11.1.2013

Karlsson (2006, 43) noted that it is common for the readers to support and to defend the blogger if offensive or critical comments appear. The fact that the blogger is a vegetarian and feeds the same food to her child rouses, from time to time, heated discussions. Loyal readers participate in the discussion, defending the blogger with validated arguments and demanding tolerance from the critics. This suggests that a strong blog community has been developed around Lähimutsi (see Morrison 2011, 38).

“How weird would it be if a vegan cooked meat separately to her child, she can eat whatever she wants when she grows up. I didn't like vegetables when I was a kid no matter how much they were offered at me, only later in life I've eaten and learned to like them. You can learn to eat meat the same way.”

-Anonym, 5.2.2013

“As far as the previous comments are concerned, vegetarianism is a great choice both for yourself and your child. Those who comment on mommy blogs should learn to respect others' choices! There are all sorts of us here, fortunately :)”

-Anonym, 21.2.2012

4.1.7 Expressing opinions

There are many things in motherhood that divide opinions and heat up feelings. Many questions divide mothers into two groups, for example some use disposable diapers but others cloth diapers and some prefer strollers while others baby slings, to name but a few examples. However, discussion can be civil if all parties validate their arguments,

are liberal, and respect the choices of others (see Campbell et al. 2011, 97). As Anu expresses, differing opinions can actually enrich life and provide food for thought:

“I don’t choose organic products actively, I don’t use cloth diapers, I buy canned food and I don’t e.g. own a sling. And still, despite all of this I enjoy reading your blog a great deal! It gives me thoughts to my own daily routines, to work and to ponder on. How boring would it be if we all were carved from the same wood! There’s plenty of room in the world :)”
-Anu, 10.1.2013

The blogger is of the opinion that the discussion in her blog is mostly civil and that the readers express and validate their opinions well. Sometimes the readers even make the blogger rethink her opinions and statements:

“I have to highlight the thing I already emphasized in the entry: those who comment on Lähiömutsi are mainly decorous and bring the conversation forward. Sometimes good comments have made me change my mind in something that I just blogged about.”
-Lähiömutsi, 10.1.2013

Discussion was mostly civil after an entry where the blogger contemplated on her fear for hordes of mothers and children’s parks, which she associates as meeting places for those hordes. Instead, the blogger emphasized that all kinds of activities and trips can be realized outside parks. The readers who had positive experiences of parks did not understand why the blogger treaded them but did not judge her nor were offended by her opinions. Instead, they highlighted the positive aspects of parks, again sharing their own experiences to others:

“I speak for parks! :D nonoNO, you shouldn’t forget about those trips and walks and activities outside parks, but there are a couple of great things in parks:
1. all the slides, swings, sandpits etcetcetc that enhance the child’s physical condition and motor functions and provide stimuli.
2. company for the child. hopefully. obviously there are no guarantees. – –
3. FENCES. Oh those nerve-savers, you can just read when the child plays her own games. – –
But hey, don’t be scared of those parks. The other mommies are not so bad after all. They don’t give advice or chatter next to you, they won’t even talk to you if you don’t approach them yourself.”
-Anonym, 10.3.2013”

“You can have a good time in parks as well. We go to parks many times a week and both mommy and the one at negative age like them, the opinion of the baby is not asked. Helsinki is full of parks that are really nice and have nice people,

pleasant staff and fun activities for kids. Give parks a chance, you can't know the truth before you spend some time there.”
-Jenni, 10.3.2013

The readers also direct constructive criticism at the blogger and remind her of things that she evidently has forgotten about. When the blogger was pondering why some mothers feel guilty about their choices when they hear how things are done in different families and wondering if the reason for this was their low self-esteem, one reader reminded her of her own feelings of guilt during the first months of motherhood. The blogger had actually acted the similarly to those she now criticized:

“I recall you telling about a day when your daughter and your husband went to a family cafe or something. You wrote something like “my husband received sighs of admiration from other mothers about his role as a participative father but I was probably looked at with disapproval as I was dragging the baby with me in the city from one place to another” (I can't remember word for word but I bet you can find the text). You are super relaxed and the best and I like your writing so much and at the same time I'm thinking about that text. To my understanding it encompassed exactly this insecurity of a woman who is growing to be a mother. – – So because you were insecure about where you can take the baby and what is good, you thought that OTHER mothers are judging you or disapproving.”
-Anonym, 12.1.2013

This kind of constructive criticism develops the relationships between and among the blogger and readers. It demonstrates that readers do not see the blogger superior to them but rather as equal. The blogger was open to this criticism and expresses her gratitude to all the readers who dare to challenge her:

“Thanks for a super comment! This is a great example on how discussion is brought forward in Lähiömutsi's comment area and how you make me reconsider things over and over again.”
-Lähiömutsi, 13.1.2013

4.1.8 Opposing values

Although discussion in the blog is mainly constructive, hostile comments in which the readers express their annoyance towards the blogger do also appear within the comments (see e.g. de Valck et al. 2009, 199; Campbell et al. 2011, 97). These hostile comments are usually directed at the blogger and not at fellow readers. Reason for the readers' annoyance can often be explained by misunderstandings. In the online

environment, the richness of in-person communication is absent (Kozinets 2006a, 282) and expressing irony might turn out to be difficult. The blogger also thinks that all the readers do not read the text properly which causes misunderstandings:

“Sometimes I’ve read the text, which has caused annoyance, through many times without finding a reason why someone has been hurt by it. Sometimes the reason has been that I might not be a master of irony ‘cause the things that I write as irony are taken seriously. Normally, however, the reason is that only bits and pieces from here and there have been read. I guess it’s my fault ‘cause I write megalomaniac texts that no-one can read through haha!”

-Lähiömutsi, 9.1.2013

The blogger has given birth to her child without analgesics but during the blog observation period there were no evidence of her disapproving or ridiculing mothers that use epidural during delivery. Regardless of this, one reader attacks the blogger in a rather hostile comment, where she accuses the blogger of something that she has not said. The comment was posted after an entry where the blogger stated that she does not feel comfortable going to children’s parks because of the mother hordes that she fears:

“I think it’s really, really funny that a person who thinks that those who use epidural want their kids to be born drugged is worried about being judged in parks. You seem to be able to judge well yourself so why wouldn’t you fit right in with others like you?”

-elele, 16.3.2013

The same entry received other hostile comments as well, in which it became clear that readers had misinterpreted the thoughts of the blogger. Even though the blogger expresses her fear for other mothers, one reader accuses her of being hostile towards them. It became evident that the blogger is not alone with her fear as other readers expressed similar feelings. However, Anonym directs her words solely to the blogger:

“Lastly, I can only be amazed by Lähiömutsi’s attitude, once again. Why on earth do you have such a hostile attitude towards other mothers, you build this picture of a horde of shell suited mothers who are waiting to offend you? Why on earth would you be so special that some imaginary horde of mothers would bother to hate you?”

-Anonym, 11.3.2013

The subject of vegetarianism also spurs heated discussion from time to time. The following comment from Anonym exemplifies that the heated comments are not always

carefully formulated. In addition, Anonym has also misinterpreted the blogger's words since she has not argued that her daughter is vegetarian of her own accord:

"I read in one of your comments that mini is a vegetarian by own choice?? I doubt it 'cause she can't make decisions so it means you've forced her to be a vegetarian and she can't decide if she wants to be a vegetarian 'cause probably she doesn't even want to try meat later 'cause she's never tried it and a young kid doesn't normally try anything weird that she hasn't tried before (I've become quite picky) so I'm just wondering this choice of yours."

-Anonym, 4.2.2013

Another example of a comment that is not constructive is Jonna's reply to an entry where the blogger told about their forthcoming backpacking trip to Thailand. The intention of this comment might be to point out that as the blogger strives for making ecological decisions, flying is certainly not ecological. However, the blogger has clearly expressed in the blog that she does not see herself as a thoroughly ecological consumer, thus making the comment appear somewhat irrelevant:

"Yippee! Traveling to far-off places is so fab, the atmosphere and the planet thank you!"

-Jonna, 14.1.2013

The readers search for a reason for these hostile, even immature, comments from the characteristics of online social interaction. As mentioned before, social cues are missing in the online environment and this evidently causes misunderstandings. In addition, it is possible that people are more straightforward and express themselves more bluntly, even spitefully, on the Internet than in face-to-face communication:

Anyway, whether you do this or that, there are always those who criticize and get offended online. The same goes with everything, it's so easy to be an aggressive jerk on the internet.

-Tiia, 12.1.2013

Where could we get more respect for other people and their choices? The internet certainly is not the right place to search for it; normal people seem to be acting unusually stupidly and because social cues are missing it's easy to interpret someone else's writing the way that suits you the best.

-Piia, 10.1.2013

It has also been recognized that some people intentionally write provocative messages to online communities with the intention of annoying others and invoking conversation.

This behavior called trolling is often carried out just for fun and the trolls are encouraged by other user's emotional responses to their posts. In some cases, it can be difficult to interpret whether a controversial post is actually the true opinion of the writer or mere trolling. (Mattson 2013, 15)

4.2 Entries attracting attention

Mishne and Glance (2006) discovered in their study that only a small number of entries contain a high number of comments. The findings of this study are consistent with the previous findings as only five entries during the observation period of four months received more than 51 comments while a majority of entries received 11–20 comments (table 5). The titles of the five most commented entries as well as the total number of comments they received are presented in appendix 4.

Table 5 Number of comments per entry

Number of comments	Number of entries
2–10	15
11–20	21
21–50	13
51–	5

Mishne and Glance (2006) observed that entries on highly-controversial topics, usually politics, received the highest number of comments. When studying brand fan pages on social networking sites de Vries et al. (2012, 89) discovered that interactive posts generate more comments. The researchers also found out that it is the positive and negative comments, but not neutral comments, that increase the overall number of comments. In addition, it was expected that, in the blogging context, lottery entries would be among the most commented entries.

As expected, two out of the five most commented entries were indeed lottery entries. However, it is notable that the lottery entries ended up on the third and the fifth places with their 134 and 65 comments, two most commented entries being thus “normal” entries. The most and the second most commented entries were about rather

controversial topics, hence supporting the findings of Mishne and Glance (2006). In the most commented entry, which received 195 comments, the blogger reflected on what it is like to be a mommy blogger and considered especially the negative aspects of it. In addition, the blogger wondered why some readers start feeling guilty when they read about the choices she has made:

“Critique and malicious comments are directed to me only like they should be. – But sometimes the comments cause confusion and astonishment in me. – It is interesting how differently people read and interpret my texts. How they think they know me. How they feel they’re entitled and obligated to teach manners to me. – But the thing that surprises me the most is guilt. It feels like no matter what you do, no matter what you write about, there is always someone who takes it as a personal offence and feels guilty. – Why do people, especially mothers, have such a great tendency to feel guilty about others’, even strangers’, doings?”

-Lähiömutsi, 9.1.2013

Vivid conversation followed this entry. Readers pondered on the reasons for feeling guilty, expressed having the same views as the blogger, shared their own experiences and encouraged the blogger to continue blogging despite blogging’s downsides. Differing opinions were also shared. Discussion was mostly constructive as the readers justified their differing opinions well. Somewhat more heated comments occurred in the comment area as well but were substantially more common after the second most commented entry that dealt with the blogger’s fear for children’s parks and other mothers in them. She states that among “normal” mothers there are so called dementors¹², who are mean, bitter, and unable to discuss different ways of parenting and to compare their choices with those of others. Thus, the discussion frame of opposing values was more evident in the second most commented entry. Otherwise the same discussion frames occurred after both entries: expressing opinions and providing peer support by sharing own experiences and by supporting the blogger.

The fourth most commented entry, on the other hand, was written on somewhat sensitive topic: gaining weight during the first year after giving birth. Discussion after this entry was supportive and positive in tone. Readers expressed their own experiences and revealed sensitive facts about their lives, thus providing peer support to the blogger as well as to other readers. Moreover, readers complemented on the blogger’s

¹² Dementors, who feed from positive thoughts and can suck people’s souls, are known from Harry Potter.

appearance and expressed that rather than focusing their attention to her body, they first notice her joy and happiness. Readers also shared information by recommending specific forms of exercise and diets. However, the discussion frame of opposing values, which was evident in the other two entries, was absent from this entry.

Positive and negative comments indeed seem to increase the total number of comments that an entry receives (de Vries et al. 2012, 89) as in many comments, the readers express whether they are of the same opinion with the blogger or not. This is particularly clear after entries on controversial topics. In the context of mommy blogging, however, peer support also plays an important role. Readers express their gratitude by sharing their own private experiences when the blogger is brave enough to write about a sensitive topic.

4.3 Conclusions and re-evaluation of the theoretical framework

The synthesis of the theoretical framework (figure 3) illustrated the motives for and the outcomes of engaging in UGC. The motives for engaging in UGC were included in the theoretical framework because they were regarded to be helpful when analyzing the data and identifying discussion frames. However, purely observational netnography is suitable for analyzing social interaction, not for studying personal motivations, and therefore the motives for engaging in UGC were left out from the re-evaluated theoretical framework. Figure 6 illustrates the re-evaluation of the theoretical framework and presents the discussion frames that were identified from the selected blog's comment area.

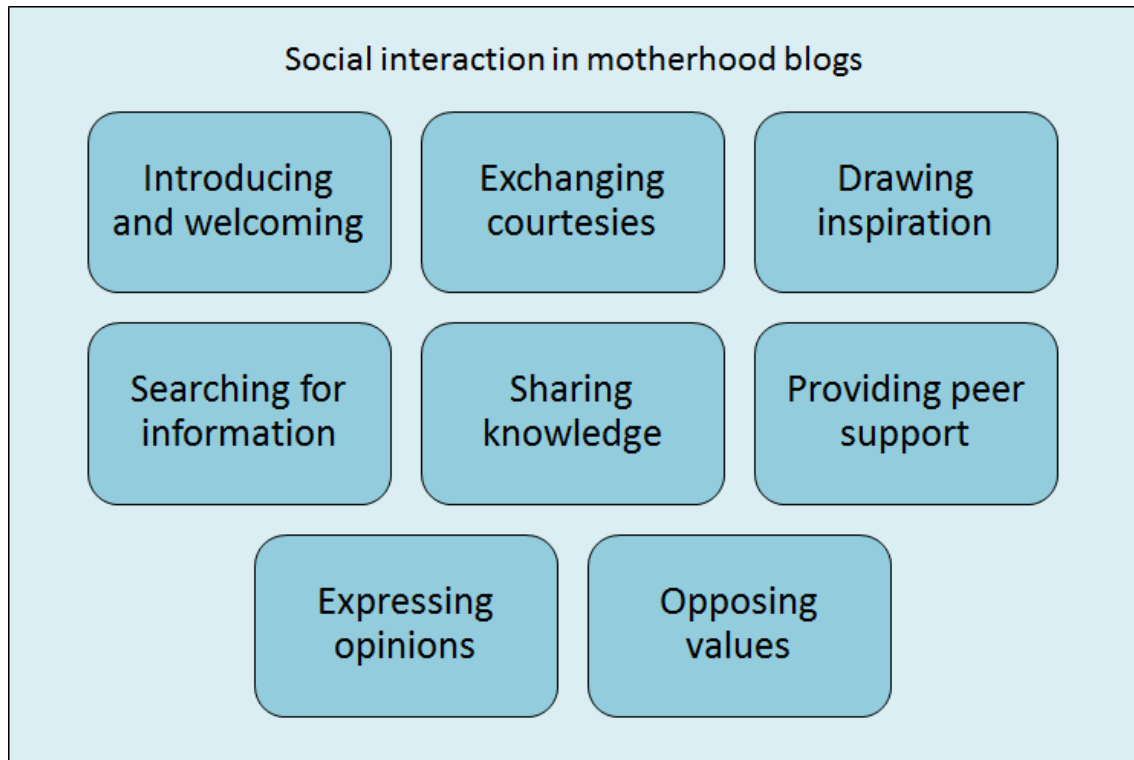


Figure 6 Social interaction in motherhood blogs

The contents of the comments vary in depth and in perspective. Introducing and welcoming as well as exchanging courtesies are parts of socialization and were separated as their own frames from the original discussion frame of social networking, which was used to refer to fulfilling one's social interaction needs (see Shao 2009, 12; Huang et al. 2008, 354; Baumer et al. 2008, 1118). Even though these two discussion frames are rather superficial in nature, they both can help in establishing relationships between the blogger and the readers. In addition, introducing is a means of differentiating oneself from other readers whereas exchanging courtesies shows that readers enjoy reading the blog. It is also notable that these discussion frames generally occur with other, more factual, discussion frames.

Drawing inspiration, a discussion frame that already existed in the preliminary theoretical framework, refers to situations when the readers unintentionally draw inspiration from the blog entries (see Huang et al. 2008, 353; Baumer et al. 2008, 1113–1115). Pictures play an important role, because readers are often inspired by the things they see in pictures, whether they are mentioned in the text or not. In addition, inspiration is drawn from the blogger's choices and her family's way of life. Discussion

frames of exchanging courtesies and searching for information often accompany drawing inspiration.

Discussion frames of searching for information and sharing knowledge are substantially more informative than the above mentioned discussion frames. These discussion frames were separated as their own frames from the original discussion frame of sharing knowledge (see Shao 2009, 10; Baumer et al. 2008, 1115); Huang et al. 2008, 353; de Valck et al. 2009, 198; Campbell et al. 2011, 97) because they both contain large amounts of factual content and serve fundamentally different purposes. Many of the topics in searching for information are product centered. Readers pose questions about products that are presented in the blog entries and about products that they see in the pictures. In addition, wider questions related to blog entries as well as enquiries about the blogger's choices are presented. In this study, sharing knowledge refers to answering questions. It is carried out by both the blogger and the blog readers. Readers share tips and advice as well as their own experiences with products that have been presented in the blog or their alternatives.

Providing peer support was a discussion frame that was expected to emerge from the data as being characteristic of mommy blogs (see Morrison 2011, 38; Schau et al. 2009, 43; de Valck et al. 2009, 200). Readers clearly express receiving peer support from the blog but also provide it to the blogger and other readers by sharing their own personal and delicate experiences. Blogs often gather together like-minded people or people who are in similar situations in life. However, as there are so many sensitive issues related to motherhood and uncertainty especially during the first months of being a mother, it seems that peer support is much more prevalent in mommy blogs than for example in fashion blogs that are perhaps the most popular personal blog group these days.

Expressing opinions and opposing values are both related to sharing one's thoughts and opinions on the topic of the entry. Expressing opinions refers to discussion that is civil, where all parties validate their opinions well and where the opinions of others are heard and respected. In the preliminary theoretical framework this discussion frame was called negotiating norms. (see Campbell et al. 2009, 97; de Valck et al. 2009, 199) However, expressing opinions was seen as a more descriptive name for this discussion frame and therefore it was renamed. Opposing values, on the other hand, remained the same from

the preliminary theoretical framework. It refers to comments that are hostile towards the blogger and where the readers' annoyance towards the blogger and/or the subject of the entry is visible because the comments are emotive and others' opinions are not respected. (see Campbell et al. 2009, 97; de Valck et al. 2009, 199) Consumers may be braver in expressing their opinions in the online environment but opposing values can also result from misunderstandings caused by the lack of social cues on the Internet. Expressing opinions is more common out of these two discussion frames, but opposing values appears also, especially after entries that are of controversial subjects.

Discussion frames of searching for information and sharing knowledge are perhaps the most relevant discussion frames from the marketers' point of view. Relevant information on the readers' preferences can be sourced from blogs' comment areas as they discuss about the positive and negative features of specific brands and compare brands with each other. The importance of the pictures is also notable. It seems that not all readers focus on the text that should be the main point of a blog but more on the pictures. Therefore large visibility can be gained if readers see products in the blog's pictures.

As expected, lottery entries were observed to be among the most commented entries of the blog. Perhaps surprisingly, however, the lottery entries ended up on the third and the fifth places, two of the most commented entries being thus normal entries. The most and the second most commented entries were written about rather controversial topics, whereas the fourth most commented entry tackled a somewhat more sensitive topic. It was observed that positive and negative comments raised the overall number of comments that an entry receives. The most prevalent discussion frames in the most commented entries were providing peer support and expressing opinions.

5 SUMMARY

User-generated content (UGC) refers to different forms of media content that are publicly available on the Internet and created by end-users. By providing different peer-to-peer and information search tools, UGC has fundamentally changed the world of entertainment, communication and information. A work has to fulfill certain requirements for it to be considered as UGC. Firstly, UGC is mass media oriented as it needs to be published on the Internet for all Internet users or to a selected group of people. Secondly, consumers have now become the producers and the work has to be created outside of professional routines and practices. Thirdly, the work has to contain a certain amount of creative effort. In addition, UGC is often produced without a direct profit motivation. UGC builds on the technical and ideological foundations of Web 2.0 and is also closely related to the term of social media, which can be defined as a group of applications that allow the creation of UGC.

Blogs, abbreviation for weblogs, are one form of UGC that can be defined as frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence, the most recent entry appearing first. Blogs typically consist of text and photos and promote interaction by allowing the readers to comments on the entries. This study focuses specifically on insite interactivity in personal blogs. The number of motherhood blogs, commonly referred to as mommy blogs, in the blogosphere has rocketed during the past few years and mommy bloggers can nowadays be seen as one of the most influential blogger subgroups. The popularity of motherhood blogs has been explained by their truthfulness; mommy bloggers are creating a more realistic picture of motherhood. Mommy blogs also provide support to other mothers and the readers are stated to feel closeness and loyalty to the blogger due to the personal feel of the writing.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze social interaction in Finnish motherhood blogs. More precisely, this study focuses on exploring social interaction between blogger and blog readers in the blog's comment area. In order to reach the purpose of the study, the following research questions are presented:

1. What kind of discussion frames can be identified among the comments that follow blog entries?
2. What kind of entries receive the largest number of comments?

Most research on blogs has focused on blog writing and the blogger, rather than on the role of the reader in the blogging process. Hence, research should explore interaction from both the blogger's and the reader's perspective as well as study interactions between blog readers. Indeed, the way community members interact with each other remains largely unknown. Because different blog groups may differ from each other quite significantly, specific blog contexts, such as motherhood blogs, should be studied. By being deeply personal, blogs offer rich and longitudinal data about consumers, their consumption practices and the roles that certain products or services play in their lives.

The literature review revealed four motives for consuming and participating in UGC. Firstly, users are motivated by social aspects, meaning that users participate in UGC for interacting with like-minded people and searching for peer support. Secondly, an essential motive for consuming UGC is information seeking. Some users intentionally read blogs in order to gain new knowledge but consumers might as well run into a blog or some other UGC site when searching for information online. Thirdly, UGC is consumed for entertainment and inspiration. Blog reading is often habitual in nature and regarded as fun and relaxing leisure time activity. Users often unintentionally draw inspiration from the blog entries. Lastly, economic incentives may serve as a minor motive for consuming UGC. Purely monetary rewards are not present in the blogging context but bloggers may occasionally arrange product or gift card lotteries. Lottery entries are among the most commented entries of the blog and it is possible that some consumers exceptionally comment on those in the hope of winning something.

Self-expression is a strong motive for producing UGC. Blogging is a way of documenting parts of one's everyday life, keeping record of one's experiences and keeping friends and family updated on one's activities and whereabouts. Secondly, social aspects, i.e. communicating with friends and like-minded people, motivate the producers as well. In addition, emotional tension is released by contemplating on things they feel passionate or obsessive about. Thirdly, producers are motivated by information dissemination, which means expressing one's values and opinions, giving advice and

sharing one's experiences. Fourthly, an essential motive for producing UGC is entertainment: bloggers choose to blog because they find it fun and enjoyable. Lastly, UGC is produced for economic and professional incentives. Advertising in blogs has become more and more common as marketers have realized the potential of blogs as a new medium for marketing. More importantly, however, bloggers appreciate the opportunities for professional advancement that blogging brings about. As can be seen from the similarity of the motives, the three usages of UGC are interdependent in reality.

Bloggers and blog readers are intimately related through the writing, reading, and commenting of blog entries. An increasing number of consumers maintain their social relationships through blogs. Virtual communities in general have redefined the concept of personal relationships because in the online environment users have the opportunity to carefully construct their virtual identities and interact anonymously. In the blogging context, however, anonymity can encourage users to express their true selves more than in real life. Blogging is socially interactive and community-like because the comment feature enables conversational exchanges between and among bloggers and readers. Mommy blogs are especially communal in nature. Mommy bloggers are driven by a desire to meet and connect with like-minded people and they are also more likely to comment on and link to other's blogs than bloggers in general. Members of pregnancy and mothering communities join them largely to gain information and peer support.

Research has revealed certain discussion practices, i.e. what is actually being shared, in virtual communities. Celebrating similarities emphasizes the fact that a shared interest is a fundamental part of virtual communities. In the strong communal atmosphere the members feel safe to disclose thoughts and behavior that they normally keep hidden in public. Sharing knowledge refers to posing and answering questions as well as providing explanations and background information. Community members also compare their attitudes, i.e. negotiate community norms and discuss how the norms should be put into practice. Opposing values often becomes concrete in a debate between two groups that have opposite opinions on a certain issue.

Taking into account the motives for engaging in UGC, the discussion practices as well as archetypes of consumer conversations that occur around user-generated advertisement, six preliminary discussion frames occurring around UGC were formed.

Discussion frames of social networking and drawing inspiration were derived largely from the motives for consuming and participating in UGC. Sharing knowledge was used to refer to both posing and answering questions. The fourth discussion frame was named as providing peer support because it was expected that peer support would be heavily present in the context of mommy blogging. However, the original discussion frame of celebrating similarities can be seen to be embedded in it. Negotiating norms refers to presenting one's thoughts and opinions and discussing in a constructive manner, whereas opposing values refers to hostile comments and heated discussion.

Netnography was chosen to be used as a research method in this study. Netnography, the roots of which lie in ethnography, is a qualitative research method designed to explore cultures and communities that emerge through computer-mediated communications. Netnography, like qualitative research in general, is concerned with interpretation, understanding, and representation of a cultural phenomenon rather than explanation, testing hypotheses, or statistical analysis. As a research method, netnography is not as time consuming, elaborate, or expensive as traditional ethnography. It can also be conducted in an entirely unobtrusive manner to solicit authentic information that has not been fabricated by the researcher. However, netnography relies heavily on the researcher's ability to provide systematic and delicate contextualization of information and skill to interpret the same.

For the most part, the research process followed the typical netnographic research process. The research process started with defining the research topic and questions. Observation of four potential mommy blogs began in January 2013. The blogs were evaluated based on the six criteria for evaluating online communities and sites as potential research objects. At the end of February 2013 a blog called Lähömutsi was chosen for more detailed study because it best met the evaluation criteria. Blog observation and data generation began in January 2013 and continued until April 2013. Purely observational netnography was chosen to be used in this study because the aim was to analyze naturally occurring social interaction in blogs. During the observation, blog entries from the beginning of December 2012 to the end of March 2013 were retrieved from the blog's archives along with the comments they had received. Retrieving old entries continued until no new themes emerged from the data. Total collected data amounted to 211 pages, containing 54 blog entries and 1377 comments.

Data analysis and interpretation took place simultaneously with data generation. In this study, data was analyzed using categorization, i.e. identifying passages of text as belonging to or representing a more general phenomenon. Initial categories and observations about the contents of the comments were recorded in the margins as researcher's fieldnotes during the initial reading of the comments. The comments were read through for the second time keeping the theoretical framework, which functioned as the interpretative framework of this study, in mind. Writing, reporting, and presenting findings began in March 2013 and continued until June 2013. The question of language was carefully taken into consideration in this study. The blog and the comments were written in Finnish and therefore careful translation was conducted. To ensure the quality of the study, the ten evaluation criteria for assessing the quality of a netnographic study were taken into consideration throughout the research process.

Eight discussion frames, namely introducing and welcoming, exchanging courtesies, drawing inspiration, searching for information, sharing knowledge, providing peer support, expressing opinions, and opposing values, were identified from the data. It is notable that the discussion frames are not mutually exclusive but, instead, two or more themes can exist in one comment.

The first two discussion frames, introducing and welcoming as well as exchanging courtesies, are parts of socialization and were separated as their own discussion frames from the original discussion frame of social networking. Drawing inspiration, a discussion frame that already existed in the preliminary theoretical framework, refers to the fact that readers unintentionally draw inspiration from the blog entries. It was noted that pictures play an important role in drawing inspiration. Discussion frames of searching for information and sharing knowledge are more informative than the first three discussion frames. These were separated as their own discussion frames from the original sharing knowledge because they both contain large amounts of factual content and serve fundamentally different purposes. In this study, searching for information refers to asking questions whereas sharing knowledge implies to answering them and giving tips and advice in general.

Discussion frame of providing peer support clearly stood out from the data. Readers expressed receiving peer support from the blog but also provide it to the blogger and

other readers by sharing their own personal and sensitive experiences. Expressing opinions and opposing values are both related to sharing one's thoughts and opinions on the topic of the entry. Expressing opinions refers to discussion that is civil, where opinions are validated, and where the opinions of others are respected. Opposing values, on the other hand, refers to comments that are hostile towards the blogger and where the readers' annoyance towards the blogger and/or the subject of the entry is visible because comments are emotive and opinions are not validated. Expressing opinions is more common out of these two discussion frames, but opposing values appears also, especially after entries that are of controversial subjects.

It was observed that relevant information on the readers' preferences can be sourced from the blog's comment area as readers discuss about the positive and negative features of specific brands and compare brands with each other. Therefore, the discussion frames of searching for information and sharing knowledge are potentially worthwhile to marketers. The importance of pictures was also noted; some readers seem to focus their attention more on the pictures than on the text. The most and the second most commented normal blog entries, meaning that they were not lottery entries, were written about rather controversial topics, whereas the fourth most commenter entry tackled a somewhat more sensitive topic. It was observed that positive and negative comments raised the overall number of comments that an entry receives. The most prevalent discussion frames in the most commented entries were providing peer support and expressing opinions.

This study focused on analyzing the discussion frames of one Finnish motherhood blog. By analyzing more Finnish motherhood blogs, some of which are more popular and some of which have narrower readership, different discussion frames might emerge. The comments may be heavily linked to specific blog contexts and therefore the results of this study cannot be generalized to other blog contexts. Hence, studying different blog contexts might reveal different discussion frames. In addition, it was observed that reader-to-reader interaction occurs in the blog's comment area but this phenomenon was not explored in detail. Thus, reader-to-reader interaction might be another interesting area for future research.

REFERENCES

- Ali-Hasan, N. F. & Adamic, L. A. 2007. Expressing social relationships on the blog through links and comments. International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media. 26.–28.3.2007. Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A.
- Arnould, E. J. & Wallendorf, M. 1994. Market-oriented ethnography: interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31 (4), 484–504.
- Bagozzi, R. P. & Dholakia, U. M. 2002. Intentional social action in virtual communities. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 16 (2), 2–21.
- Baumer, E., Sueyoshi, M. & Tomlinson, B. 2008. Exploring the role of the reader in the activity of blogging. Proceeding of the twenty-sixth annual SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems. 5.–10.4.2008. Florence, Italy. 1111–1120.
- Baym, N. K. 2002. Interpersonal life online. In Lievrouw, L. A. & Livingstone, S. (eds.) *Handbook on new media: social shaping and consequences of ICTs*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. 62–76.
- Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B. & Hollebeek, L. 2013. Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: an exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 66 (1), 105–114.
- Campbell, C., Pitt, L. F., Parent, M. & Berthon, P. R. 2011. Understanding consumer conversations around ads in a web 2.0 world. *Journal of Advertising*, 40 (1), 87–102.
- Chen, Y-N. C. 2010. Examining the presentation of self in popular blogs: a cultural perspective. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 3 (1), 28–41.
- Child, J. T., Petronio, S., Agyeman-Budu, E. A. & Westermann, D. A. 2011. Blog scrubbing: exploring triggers that change privacy rules. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27 (5), 2017–2027.
- Chopin, K. 2008. Finding communities: alternative viewpoints through weblogs and tagging. *Journal of Documentation*, 64 (4), 552–575.
- Courtois, C., Mechant, P., De Marez, L. & Verleye, G. 2009. Gratifications and seeding behavior of online adolescents. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15 (1), 109–137.
- Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S. & Bright, L. 2008. Exploring consumer motivations for creating use-generated content. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 8 (2), 16–25.

- Deighton, J. & Konrfeld, L. 2009. Interactivity's unanticipated consequences for marketers and marketing. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23 (1), 4–10.
- de Valck, K., van Bruggen, G. H. & Wierenga, B. 2009. Virtual communities: a marketing perspective. *Decision Support Systems*, 47 (3), 185–203.
- de Vries, L., Gensler, S. & Leeftang, P. S. H. 2012. Popularity of brand posts on brand fan pages: an investigation of the effects of social media marketing. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26 (2), 83–91.
- Dubois, A. & Gadde, L-E. 2002. Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, 55 (7), 553–560.
- Duffy, D. L. 2005. Affiliate marketing and its impact on e-commerce. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22 (3), 161–163.
- Efimova, L. & de Moor, A. Beyond personal webpublishing: an exploratory study of conversational blogging practices. *Proceedings of the 38th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. 3.–6.1.2005. Waikoloa, Hawaii. 1–10.
- Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, A. 2008. *Qualitative methods in business research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Grönfors, M. 2010. Havaintojen teko aineistonkeräyksen menetelmänä. In Aaltola, J. & Valli, R. (eds.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin I. Metodien valinta ja aineistonkeruu: virikkeitä aloittelevalle tutkijalle*. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus. 154–170.
- Gummesson, E. 2005. Qualitative research in marketing. Road-map for a wilderness of complexity and unpredictability. *Qualitative research in marketing*, 39 (3/4), 309–327.
- Heinonen, K. 2011. Consumer activity in social media: managerial approaches to consumers' social media behavior. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 10 (6), 356–364.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Malhotra, E. C., Frieger, C., Gensler, S., Lobschat, L., Rangaswamy, A. & Skiera, B. 2010. The impact of new media on customer relationships. *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (3), 311–330.
- Hennig-Thurau, T. & Walsh, G. 2003. Electronic word-of-mouth: motives for and consequences of reading customer articulations on the internet. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 8 (2), 51–74.
- Herring, S. C., Scheidt, L. A., Wright, E. & Bonus, S. 2005. Weblogs as a bridging genre. *Information Technology & People*, 18 (2), 142–171.
- Hoffman, D. L. & Novak, T. P. 2012. Toward a deeper understanding of social media. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26 (2), 69–70.

- Hsu, C-L. & Lin, J. C-C. 2008. Acceptance of blog usage: the roles of technology acceptance, social influence and knowledge sharing motivation. *Information & Management*, 45 (1), 65–74.
- Huang, L-S., Chou, Y-J. & Lin, C-H. 2008. The influence of reading motives on the responses after reading blogs. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11 (3), 351–355.
- Jung, T., Youn, H. & McClung, S. 2007. Motivations and self-presentation strategies on Korean-based “Cyworld” weblog format personal homepages. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 10 (1), 24–31.
- Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53 (1), 59–68.
- Karlsson, L. 2006. Acts of reading diary weblogs. *Human IT*, 8 (2), 1–59.
- Karvonen, A-E. 2013. Äidiltä äidille. *Lapse* 3/2012, 28–30.
- Kim, H-S. & Jin, B. 2006. Exploratory study of virtual communities of apparel retailers. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 10 (1), 41–55.
- Kiviniemi, K. 2010. Laadullinen tutkimus prosessina. In Aaltola, J. & Valli, R. (eds.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin II. Näkökulmia aloittelevalle tutkijalle tutkimuksen teoreettisiin lähtökohtiin ja analyysimenetelmiin*. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus. 70–85.
- Kozinets, R. V. 1999. E-tribalized marketing? The strategic implications of virtual communities of consumption. *European Management Journal*, 17 (3), 252–264.
- Kozinets, R. V. 2002. The field behind the screen: using netnography for marketing research in online communities. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 39 (1), 61–72.
- Kozinets, R. V. 2006a. Click to connect: netnography and tribal advertising. *Journal of advertising research*, 46 (3), 279–288.
- Kozinets, R. V. 2006b. Netnography 2.0. In Belk, R. (ed.) *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 129–141.
- Kozinets, R. V. 2010. *Netnography. Doing ethnographic research online*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Kozinets, R. V., de Valck, K., Wojnicki, A. C. & Wilner, S. J. S. 2010. Networked narratives: understanding word-of-mouth marketing in online communities. *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (2), 71–89.
- Langer, R. & Beckman, S. C. 2005. Sensitive research topics: netnography revisited. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 8 (2), 189–203.

- Ley, B. L. 2007. Vive les roses!: the architecture of commitment in an online pregnancy and mothering group. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12 (4), 1388–1408.
- Li, J. & Chignell, M. 2010. Birds of a feather: how personality influences blog writing and reading. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 68 (9), 589–602.
- Lopez, L. K. 2009. The radical act of ‘mommy blogging’: redefining motherhood through the blogosphere. *New Media & Society*, 11 (5), 729–747.
- Lu, H-P. & Lee, M-R. 2010. Demographic differences and the antecedents of blog stickiness. *Online Information Review*, 34 (1), 21–38.
- Mattson, J. 2013. Verkon vääreleuat. *Aamulehti, Sunnuntai-liite*, 4.8.2013, 14–16.
- Mishne, G. & Glance, N. 2006. Leave a reply: an analysis of weblog comments. Third Annual Workshop on the Weblogging Ecosystem: Aggregation, Analysis and Dynamics. In WWW2006, 15th International World Wide Web Conference. 22.–26.5.2006. Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Moisander, J. & Valtonen, A. 2006. *Qualitative marketing research: a cultural approach*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Morrison, A. 2011. “Suffused by feeling and affect”: the intimate public of personal mommy blogging. *Biography*, 34 (1), 37–55.
- Muñiz, A. M. & Schau, H. J. 2007. Vigilante marketing and consumer-created communications. *Journal of Advertising*, 36 (3), 35–50.
- Nardi, B. A., Schiano, D. J. & Gumbrecht, M. 2004. Blogging as social activity, or, would you let 900 million people read your diary? CSCW ’04 Proceedings of the 2004 ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work, 6 (3), 222–231.
- Panteli, N., Yan, L. & Chamakiotis, P. 2011. Writing to the unknown: bloggers and the presence of backpackers. *Information Technology & People*, 24 (4), 362–377.
- Parent, M., Plangger, K. & Bal, A. 2011. The new WTP: willingness to participate. *Business Horizons*, 54 (3), 219–229.
- Park, B., Ahn, S. & Kim, H. 2010. Blogging: mediating impacts of flow on motivational behavior. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 4 (1), 6–29.
- Rokka, J. & Moisander, J. 2009. Environmental dialogue in online communities: negotiating ecological citizenship among global travellers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33 (2), 199–205.
- Rokka, J. 2010. Netnographic inquiry and new translocal sites of the social. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 34 (4), 381–387.

- Romm, C., Pilskin, N. & Clarke, R. 1997. Virtual communities and society: toward an integrative three phase model. *International Journal of Information Management*, 17 (4), 260–270.
- Savolainen, R. 2011. Asking and sharing information in the blogosphere: the case of slimming blogs. *Library & Information Science Research*, 33 (1), 73–79.
- Schau, H. J., Muñiz, A. M. & Arnould, E. J. 2009. How brand community practices create value. *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (5), 30–51.
- Schmidt, J. 2007. Blogging practices: an analytical framework. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12 (4), 1409–1427.
- Seraj, M. 2012. We create, we connect, we respect, therefore we are: intellectual, social and cultural value in online communities. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26 (4), 209–222.
- Shao, G. 2009. Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: a uses and gratification perspective. *Internet Research*, 19 (1), 7–25.
- Spiggle, S. 1994. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (3), 491–503.
- Stoeckl, R., Rohmeier, P. & Hess, T. 2007. Motivations to produce user generated content: differences between webloggers and videobloggers. *Proceedings of the 20th Bled eConference*. 4.–6.6.2007. Bled, Slovenia. 398–413.
- Thomas, T. C., Price, L. L. & Schau, H. J. 2013. When differences unite: resource dependence in heterogeneous consumption communities. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (5), 1010–1033.
- Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. 2009. *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi*. Jyväskylä: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi.
- Wunsch-Vincent, S. & Vickery, G. 2006. *Participative web: user-generated content*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Ödman, P.-J. 2007. Hermeneutics in research practice. In Gustavsson, B. (ed.) *The principles of knowledge creation. Research methods in the social sciences*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. 113–130.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

- Blackshaw, P. 2007. The official CGM glossary. Cited 14.5.2013.
< <http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/1718641/the-official-cgm-glossary> >
- Blackshaw, P. & Nazzaro, M. 2006. Consumer-generated media (CGM) 101: word-of-mouth in the age of the web-fortified consumer. Cited 13.2.2013.
<http://www.nielsen-online.com/downloads/us/buzz/nbzm_wp_CGM101.pdf>

- Blogibarometri 2012. Manifesto. Cited 15.2.2013.
 <<http://www.manifesto.fi/news/2012/09/blogibarometri-2012-bloggaajastatuli-julkkis-ja-asiantuntija.html>>
- Blogibarometri 2011. Manifesto. Cited 25.4.2013.
 <<http://www.manifesto.fi/news/2011/09/blogibarometri-2011-bloggaaminen-ammattimaistunut-selvasti.html>>
- Blogilista. Cited 35.4.2013.
 <<http://www.blogilista.fi/sivu/seuraa>>
- Bloglovin'. Cited 25.4.2013.
 <<http://www.bloglovin.com/what-is-bloglovin>>
- Blood, R. 2002. Weblogs: a history and perspective. Cited 17.2.2013.
 <http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html>
- Facebook 2013. Key Facts. Cited 26.4.2013.
 <<http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>>
- Grossman, L. 2006. You – yes, you – are Time's person of the year. Time 25.12.2006. Cited 4.12.2012.
 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1570810,00.html>>
- Lähiömutsi. Cited 2.4.2013.
 <www.mutsiavautuu.com>
- Lähiömutsi Facebook. Cited 24.4.2013.
 <<http://www.facebook.com/lahiomutsi?ref=ts&fref=ts>>
- Morrison, A. 2010. Autobiography in real time: a genre analysis of personal mommy blogging. Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 4 (2). Cited 9.5.2013.
 <<http://www.cyberpsychology.eu/view.php?cisloclanku=2010120801/>>
- Nelliinan vaatehuone 30.7.2012. Sponsoroitu: piilomainonnasta. Cited 26.5.2013
 <<http://www.olivialehti.fi/nelliinan-vaatehuone/2012/07/sponsoroitu-piilomainonnasta/>>
- Sanastokeskus TSK ry 2010. Sosiaalisen median sanasto. TSK 40. Cited 26.4.2013.
 <http://www.tsk.fi/tiedostot/pdf/Sosiaalisen_medan_sanasto>
- Technorati 2010. State of the blogosphere 2010. Cited 11.5.2013.
 <<http://technorati.com/social-media/article/state-of-the-blogosphere-2010-introduction/>>
- Tilastokeskus 2013. Väestön tieto- ja viestintätekniikan käyttö. Cited 2.4.2013.
 <http://www.stat.fi/til/sutivi/2012/sutivi_2012_2012-11-07_tau_012_fi.html>

Tumblr 2013. Cited 26.4.2013.

< <https://www.tumblr.com/>>

Turun Sanomat 30.7.2012. Piilomainos voi hiipiä blogitekstiin. Cited 9.5.2013.

<<http://www.ts.fi/teemat/kuluttaja/372442/Piilomainos+voi+hiipia+blogitekstiin>>

Turun Sanomat 12.5.2013. Netissä äidit pääsevät ääneen. Cited 16.5.2013.

< <http://www.ts.fi/teemat/tiede/482967/Netissa+aidit+paasevat+aaneen>>

Twitter 2013. Who's on Twitter? Cited 26.4.2013.

< <https://business.twitter.com/whos-twitter>>

Youtube 2013. Statistics. Cited 26.4.2013.

< <http://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Comment area of Lähiömutsi

16 kommenttia



Milla 6. maaliskuuta 2013 8.49

Tiskikoneen kanssa kannattaa olla varovainen, sillä duplopalikat voivat pahimmassa tapauksessa sulaa siellä. Varsinkin, jos ne pääsevät putoamaan alatasolle. Duplot voi kuitenkin tyynyliinan sisällä heittää myös pyykinpesukoneeseen ja puhdasta tulee niinkin. Lämpötila on aika paljon alhaisempi, joten palikat ovat paremmassa turvassa. :)

Toi vetolelu onkin meidän toivelistalla. Näyttää kivalta ja uskon, että olisi sekä isoveljen että pikkusiskon mieleen.

Vastaa

▼ Vastaukset



Lähiömutsi 10. maaliskuuta 2013 12.34

Hei hyvä vinkki tuo tyynyliina ja pyykinpesukone, tattis!

Vastaa



Paula 6. maaliskuuta 2013 9.15

Kyllä on hankintalistalla tuo vetolelu, pojan suosikkieläimiäkin on kirahvi joten varmaan tykkäisi noita palikoitakin kuskata siinä muodossa ;) Ja vetolelut on kyllä suosiossa kovasti olleet tässä viime aikoina muutenkin, mummilassa on sellainen ihana vanha puinen "auto" johon saa pari ukkeliä kuskiksi ja puupalikoita kyytiin, se on kyllä paras. Ja toki Brion mäyräkoira kotona myös on suosikki, oma "Igor" mummilan koiran mukaan nimettyä ;)

Vastaa

▼ Vastaukset



Lähiömutsi 10. maaliskuuta 2013 12.35

Mä olen yrittänyt bongaila kirppiksiltä vanhaa Brion mäyräkoiraa kohtuullisella hinnalla, mutta taitaa olla mahdoton yhdistelmä.

Vastaa

Lähiömutsi, 5.3.2013

APPENDIX 2: Reader to reader interaction in Lähiömutsi



Lottiina 29. tammikuuta 2013 19.56

Aivan mahtava uimarengas, mä haluan myös meidän minille tuollaisen :) Oon usein miettinyt uimaan lähtöä, mutta tuntuu niin hankalalta, kun baby on vasta 8kk.

Vastaa

▼ Vastaukset



Rouva K 30. tammikuuta 2013 10.35

Lottiina, rohkeasti vaan! Mitä nuorempana aloittaa, sitä helpommin vedestä tulee ystävä :) Meillä nyt 6,5 kk tytär aloitti vauvauinnin nelikuukautisena. Esikoinen (5 v.) on käynyt samat uinnit kans. Nykyään ui ja sukeltaa eikä tulus vedestä pois ollenkaan.. Vauvauinnissa vauva oppii sukeltamaan (ensin luontaisen refleksin avulla ja sitten opitusti) ja siihen on oltava koulutetut ohjaajat läsnä, mutta kyllä uimaan voi ominkin päin mennä. Lastenaltaaseen, niin että uittajilla ylettyy jalat pohjaan (ja vesi on lämmintä). Uimahallissa/kylpylässä tylsintä on perheen kanssa se, kun vanhempien on mentävä eri pukareihin/pesuhuoneisiin. Puku- ja pesuhuoneessa auttaakin, jos on joku kaveri mukana jelpimässä pienen nakupellen kanssa. Mutta yksinkin kyllä tulee toimeen - hyviä apuvälineitä esim. Bumbo-istuin.



Lähiömutsi 30. tammikuuta 2013 13.35

Renkaan kanssa mäkin varmasti uskallaudun useammin uimaan merenneitomme kanssa. Reilun parinkymppin hinta on joka euron arvoinen.

Vastaa

Lähiömutsi 29.1.2013

APPENDIX 3: Data-rich comment in Lähiömutsi



Anonyymi 15. tammikuuta 2013 11.53

Hei lähiömutsi, ihana blogi sulla! Me oltiin viime talvena yksi vee ja rapiat tyttömme kanssa thaimaassa ja minä rantapallon nielleenä (6 kk raskaana). Loma meni ehdottomasti top kolmoseen vaikka pien rajoitteita oli yllämainituista syistä. Me syötiin paikallista ruokaa jos mahdollista tosin katsottiin vähän paikan tasoa. Tytöllä oli myös omia ruokia mukana. Omat vaipat myös on hyvät, paikan päältä saa myös mutta olivat hyvin pieniä pakkauksia. Pesulapalvelua käytettiin paikanpäältä löytyy hyviä ja hiukan edullisimpia kuin hotellin. Hottelin on tietenkin helpoin ratkasu. Retkillä käytiin snorklausretki onnistu esim. Hyvin kun vuorotellen snorklattiin ja toinen vahti lasta veneessä. Käytimme paikallista retkipalvelua he ootivat esim. Tosi hyvin huomioon raskauteni ja kertoivat mihin en saa/voi osallistua jopa niin tarkkoja olivat että en melkein päässyt kotiin takaisin vaikka mulla oli lääkärin todistus varalta, että saan lentää :) (ei muu kyllä olis haitannu jäädä paratiisiin). Kantoreppu oli ihan ehdoton. Me käytimme pelkästään tuk tukeja, pitkähäntä veneitä sekä mini bussja (lavautoja). Meillä oli varalta myös oma pelastusliivi lapselle. Ihailkaa apinoita kaempaa, vaikka olisikin ihana mennä vähän ruokkimaan. Ne ovat varkaita ja voivat purra meidän lomalla muutamaa turistia puri apina ja loppu loman he joutuvat käymään sairaalassa joka päivä ottamassa rokotteen. Lentokoneessa kysyimme, ja saimme työlle oman paikan kun koneessa oli tilaa. Miniläppäri ladattuna muumeilla toimi ajanviettenä plus nukkuminen onnistui meillä hyvin. Nousussa ja laskussa syötimme tytölle rusinoita kun purkkaa ei osaa jauhaa vielä. Paikalliset todennäköisesti hullaantuu minimehin. Meidän tytöllä oli vielä vaaleat enkeli kiharat ja hän sai paljon ihailua paikallisilta ja muilta turisteilta etenkin japanilaisilta mutta hyvän maun rajoissa. Kannattaa kuitenkin ystävällisesti huomauttaa jos ette moisesta tykkää yhtään. Omassa hotellissamme saimme joskus jopa syödä amupalamme miehen kanssa rauhassa kun henkilökunta leikitytti vieressä tyttöä ja ihastus oli molimmin puolista. Hotellistamme löytyi vedenkeitin ja luulen, että lähes kaikista hotelleista löytyy. Matkarattaat meillä oli mukana, muuten emme niitä käyttäneet mutta olivat siihen tarkoitukseen hyvät kun lähdimme illalla syömään tai päiväkari aikaan niin lapsi nukkui niissä ja meillä oli vapaat kädet miehen kanssa syödä. Ihana loma teille tulee, ei annata stressata etukäteen, letkein mielin matkaan. Jos jotain kumminkin tulee niin paikanpäältä löytyy hyvät lääkärit. Tulipas pitkä sepustus :)

Vastaa

▼ Vastaukset



Lähiömutsi 23. tammikuuta 2013 5.41

Kiitos pitkästä kommentistasi ja vinkeistä! Apinoista on moni muukin varoitellut, mutta vielä ei olla niihin törmättykään tai pyritty pääsemään kontaktiin. Lentokoneessa laskuissa ja nousuissa Minimen kohdalla toimi taas pillimehun ryystäminen - ei tainnut huomata korvissaan mitään, ONNEKSI. Ja joo, täällä tosiaan hotellivarustukseen taitaa kuulua vedenkeitin, hyvä!

Vastaa

Lähiömutsi 13.1.2013

APPENDIX 4: Entries that received 51 or more comments

Date	Title of the entry	Comments
9.1.2013	Bloggaamisesta, supermutsiudesta, paskaäityidestä ja syyllistymisestä	195
10.3.2013	Äitilaumapelko ja puistopakko	134
20.2.2013	Arvonta: Lasten aarteita	104
24.3.2013	Vauvavuosisikilojen paino	66
6.3.2013	Arvonta: Äidin kielletyt tunteet -kirja ja muut väestöliiton julkaisut	65